OCT 24 1957

IMMORTALITY

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BY

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New York & London
The Knickerbocker Press
1924

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INTRODUCTION

By The Right Honble. Lord Ernle

"If men die, shall they cease to live?" There is no other question that has stirred human hearts so deeply, for so long a period, over such vast spaces of the habitable globe. More than ten thousand years ago it was asked of ancient Egypt and she made answer that immortality was an axiom of life. From the earliest literature of the Aryan-speaking race, comes a reply which in effect is similar. In the primitive philosophy of almost all the savage races of which we have any knowledge appears a belief in the distinction between the human body and the soul which gives it individual life and character, and in the continued spiritual existence of this personal self apart from the body which it has animated. No religion, whether it be of one God, or of many, or of none, has swayed great masses of mankind, unless it has met the question; and all are agreed that the soul survives death.

In an agreement so wide-spread and deep-

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rooted, men have sought a proof of the truth of the belief in the survival of the soul. Though to hundreds of millions of men the belief brings only misery, they cannot escape its domination. The Hindu and the Buddhist place their highest happiness in the final extinction of individual consciousness. Their creed offers them every temptation to believe that death is the gate, not of life, but, as it appears to be, of non-existence. Yet, in spite of appearances, and even of probabilities, that this life is all, in spite also of all the miseries that their form of belief involves, neither can rid himself of the conviction that individual life is not extinguished in the grave. The evidence of those who dread the continuance of consciousness, yet still believe it to be true, is almost more telling than the evidence of those who crave it as a boon. Yet, as strict proof of the truth of the belief, neither the desire nor the dread, nor the two in combination, are of avail. The conviction of immortality is not so universal that it can be called a natural instinct of humanity. There have always been many to whom the survival of the individual soul has seemed a delusion. At the most, the prevalence and persistence of the belief are striking facts in the mental history of mankind. They are nothing more.

As to the continued life of the individual soul,

there is approach to unanimity. But, on the form, nature and quality of that future existence there is wide disagreement. Mysteries so profound, and of such universal concern, have stimulated human speculation, and imaginative ingenuity has dreamed dreams and seen visions, some beautiful, some grotesque and horrible, some material, some spiritual, which have been accepted as articles of faith. In some of the chapters that follow these prefatory lines, are traced variations in the beliefs of four of the principal peoples whose thought has most powerfully influenced the religious life of the world. Here, both at the moment when Christ "brought life and immortality to light by the gospel," and in the subsequent period, when doctrinal Christianity was taking shape, may be collected the common stock of contemporary ideas on the life of the soul after death. In other chapters, are discussed the development of Christian doctrines, the ethical basis of the hope, the testimony of poets, the judgment of philosophy, and the attitude of science.

The book will, it is hoped, prove not only to be of interest and value but to meet a real need which is widely felt. During the past seventy years, the attitude of thought towards religious questions, and the materials on which thought is exercised, have profoundly changed. Subjects

which by common consent were beyond the pale of discussion are now discussed with freedom. In 1850, it was a courageous act to question details of orthodox Christianity; to-day, in certain circles, courage is needed for their defence. There are, no doubt, multitudes whose faith in Revelation as a final authority, and in the Resurrection as a historical fact, is still so strong and unhesitating that their hope of immortality is "sure and certain." But it would be worse than idle to pretend that all men stand, or are able to stand, on the same firm ground. The rapid conquest of new fields of knowledge, the triumphal progress of the discoveries of science, the methods of scientific inquiry, have disturbed the beliefs of many. They fear; they doubt: they hesitate to found their faith on a synthesis that has not been, and cannot be, scientifically proved. They ask anxiously whether science has demonstrated the falsity of their hope in the continuity of the existence of the personal self beyond the grave; whether there are fallacies in the absolute philosophy which finds for it no place, whether metaphysics or ethics rejects its possibility. On all these and similar points they will find an answer in this volume from masters of their respective subjects. No cogent proof can be offered either of the truth or of the falsity of the hope in im-

mortality. But the central point on which the essays converge is that, it is not only a possible truth, but the object of a reasonable faith such as that on which men act in all practical affairs, and the most adequate interpretation of the ethical and spiritual values of the life of mankind.

Human hearts will always have reasons of which reason knows nothing. But the belief in immortality ultimately rests on the truth of the belief in the government of the Universe by one supreme, moral and spiritual Being. Happy are those whose faith on this point has survived the shock of recent years, and not the least part of their happiness lies in the "sure and certain hope" of a future life. For those who have lost that faith, no discoveries of science can restore the inspiration of a hope which owes not a little of its uplifting beauty to its very vagueness. The boon that they desire is not immortality, but non-existence.

ERNLE.

March 11, 1924.

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Immortality

Egyptian Conceptions of Immortality

Sir Flinders Petrie, D.C.L., Litt.D., F.R.S.
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To the Egyptian, immortality was an axiom of life. In the earliest graves that we know, there is provision for the future. In the deepest pessimism the Egyptian looked on death like the going forth into a garden after illness, or returning to his house after captivity. There was no possible question to his mind as to the fact of immortality, however varied and contradictory might be his many beliefs about the conditions of it. Notwithstanding his fleshly—though decent—life, he had a strongly spiritual nature. He recognised the ancestral spirit (*ka*) as pervading his being, probably as the formative principle; it was to this ancestral spirit that he was rejoined when he was gathered to his fathers. He also recognised the illumination (*aakhu*) or intelligence, which enlightened him. A name was essential to him, as well as to everything else, without which nothing really existed. His

soul (*ba*) was thought of after death as a human-headed bird, which could fly in and out of the tomb. All of these were separate from his material body (*sahu*) for the preservation of which the tomb was built. It seems likely that as we can trace the various gods and incongruous beliefs to different races that entered the country, so the idea of these various spiritual elements of man were due to the mixture of races. Probably the *ba* belongs to the oldest stratum, the *ka* to the Osiris worshippers, and the *aakhu* to the followers of Ra.

In the prehistoric graves there is elaborate provision of clothing, food, and weapons; in the second civilisation games were often provided. There was a regular ritual for the dead: the principal jars of food and drink are placed in constant positions. Further back, even, can be traced the belief in crossing the water of death to the next world; the dead person is supposed to pass over on reed floats, even the king had not a boat, and yet boats were known early in the first civilisation. This reliance on floats must have come from a time before any of the civilisation that we can trace in prehistoric ages.

A belief which was certainly very early was that of the soul wandering about the cemetery seeking food. This is connected with the representation of the soul as a human-headed bird.

Down to late times there are figures of the goddess in the sycamore-fig tree giving food and drink to the soul. This was not only a symbol of spiritual sustenance, for actual offerings of food were made at the grave, and even continue to be made in some form down to the present time.

All these views are evidently older than the earliest fragment of ritual which is preserved. In that, the ideal of the future life is the association with the sky-goddess. This deity was appealed to (1) by her vitality to give life to the dead, (2) by her ruling powers to protect the dead, (3) by her control of all things to give a place to the dead among the circumpolar stars that never set, and so are immortal, (4) by her guidance of the gods who travel through the sky, to guard the dead likewise from wandering and being lost.

There is a further and grosser idea which also belongs to the earliest ages, that of capturing and eating a god to acquire his divine qualities. The dead "eat men and live on gods"; the powerful kings "eat their charms and devour their souls; the great ones are the morning meal, the middle ones are the evening meal, the little ones are the night portion." All this obviously comes down from the ages before Osiris reclaimed the Egyptians from cannibalism and taught them

agriculture. Yet how familiar still are these earliest ideas of the waters of death, the life in the sky, and the material theophagy; ten thousand years have not obliterated them from popular conceptions.

The next great stage was due to the civilisation that came in with the Osiris worship, probably from the West. The primitive conception of bliss was the being in the company of the gods: we shall see this continually mentioned also in later times. In order to enjoy this blessing it became obvious to the moral sense that some scrutiny was necessary, as in any earthly court. For this the actions during life must be considered and appraised: hence arose a judgment before Osiris, with other gods as assessors. This enforced the idea of a moral standard, and of falling below that standard. Hence the next stage was the appeal to the four sons of Horus, "Salutations to you, Lords of righteousness, the company behind Osiris, causing to cut away sins, behold ye me, I come to you, extinguish all sins belonging to me." Here sin is recognised as a bar to the fellowship with the gods; yet the dead can be purged from it by invocation of the assessor gods. We cannot say when this idea was accepted, or how soon this train of consequent beliefs grew up. Certainly the use of a definite moral code was very early, as the repu-

diation of sins entirely ignores duties to wife or family, or any sexual limitations apart from profanation of temples by licence. This code was arranged in groups of five related sins, evidently for the sake of finger-counting as an aid to memory. In a primitive dialogue between the dead and the celestial ferryman over the waters of death, the ferryman demands, "Can you count your fingers?" apparently the popular term for knowing the moral code.

All of these ideas belong to the Osiris beliefs which were the religion of the first prehistoric age, about 8,000–7,000 B.C. according to the Egyptians. The Osiris tribes on entering Egypt partly mixed with, and partly fought, the Set-worshipping tribes, which seem to have come up the Red Sea coast. From the habit of the people there of living in huts raised on trees, and going up to them by a ladder (as in Central Africa now) it was natural to adopt the imagery of going up to heaven by a ladder, and Set was the guardian of the Heavenly ladder. This could only arise when the ideas of the Somali home of those tribes were still vividly in mind, and must belong to the beginning of the prehistoric civilisation. So far, we have been dealing with an age far before any written documents, of which only gleanings can be learned from fragments of ritual, which carry their primitive character in

their internal features. Yet we see how ten thousand years ago most of the moral elements of a belief in immortality were already accepted.

The next great change was the eastern influence of the Second Prehistoric age, which brought in the worship of the sun-god Ra. Here the imagery of an earthly court and kingdom belonging to Osiris was dropped, and the future life was regarded as the travel along with the company of the gods in the boat of the sun, across the heavens by day, and through the hours of darkness in the night.

We pass now from what we can infer from later documents and arrive at the direct statements of the earliest inscriptions. These are preserved on amulets for the dead, in the form of cylinders which are doubtless due to the Mesopotamian source of the dynastic race. On these the principal wish is to be like a god, or united to a god: less often there are prayers for food or protection. In the first dynasty there is no reference to any offerings on the tombstones, which are solely occupied with name and titles. By the third dynasty, the prayers for all material requirements are fully set out—cattle, food, drink, incense, and clothing are all specified. This system was extended until in the fifth and sixth dynasties the lists extend to nearly a hundred items. These are divided into

the order of daily service: washing, incense, and anointing on rising, then clothing; offerings to the gods: a light meal, followed by mouth-washing; a heavy meal during the day; lastly the evening meal, mainly of fruit and wine. These manual acts of the service would be performed on the statue of the deceased person, for the refreshment of his soul, as the priests performed them for the statues of the gods. The food would be set before the statue, and (it is to be presumed) was finally consumed by the officiant. It is clear that all this system goes back to the primitive belief in the soul dwelling in and near the tomb, and needing to be nourished there. There is no trace of the Osirian future life, or of the protection by Ra: the Egyptian in the early dynasties had slipped out of all the mythology which had been planted upon him by invading races, and was back on to the most primitive notions of the wandering soul. This is much like taking up to-day Le Braz' *Night of Fires*, and feeling that one might slip back naturally into the pre-Christian service of the dead which still lasts in Brittany.

The tomb was the real home of the dead, where the soul wandered in and out, going down to the body below, and then out, as the *ba* bird. It passed by a narrow slit in the brick front of the tomb, or by a reed buried upright to lead

to the outer air, or by a long square channel through the mass of a pyramid, or by a little hole in the rock between the sepulchre and the offering place. The actual offering of food was found to decay, so models of food were placed in the tomb; these models were then transferred in high relief to the walls; then simplified, until only a painted figure of the food remains. Similarly all the possessions of a man were transferred in figure to the tomb; he was sculptured standing, beholding all his servants and farm and property, from the desert down to the Nile. Thus his soul could enjoy again all his former wealth. The poor, who could not afford such costly works, provided a pottery tray with a model tank and images of food offerings piled beside it. This was placed at the mouth of the grave: then the thought of the soul shivering in the night wind, prompted the making of a shelter for it. The stretched out Bedawy tent was changed to a little hut; this became a portico; then a chamber behind the portico appeared; more chambers followed; a stairway up to a second floor was added; models of chairs and couches, water jars and stands, the grinding stones, and a woman grinding corn; thus at last a complete model of a countryman's home supplied earthly comfort to the soul.

The Egyptian never seems to have had the

dread of the return of the soul, often observed in other lands. The dead were usually furnished with weapons, and there was continual connection kept up with the tomb. In the prehistoric times the head was in many cases removed from the body, and replaced much later. This can only be akin to the present African custom of preserving the head in the house, and placing food before it at all the family festivals, thus keeping up the unity of the family as long as possible. The provision of the model houses by the grave was therefore a pious help, and not a means of detaining the soul in the cemetery.

The dominance of the worship of Ra under the fifth dynasty had its effect on the belief in the future. To live under the protection of Ra it was needful to enter the boat of the sun. Just as a model head or foot was placed with the body, as a charm to ensure the use of hands or feet, so a model boat was placed along with earlier kinds of servant-models, in order to give the dead the power of intercepting the sun boat on the water. It is surprising that, in spite of seeing all light come from the sun, the Egyptian had the perverse idea of the sun going into darkness as it set. The dead who accompanied the sun also therefore went into the dark. The successive hours being divisions of the night must have gateways, through which the soul had to

pass; and gates must have gatekeepers, so demons which guarded the gates had to be appeased to let the souls through. All this was a ghastly misapplication of logic, but became a leading idea of the future life in the later ages of the Pharaohs.

The kingdom of Osiris was the most popular idea in the eighteenth to twentieth dynasties. In that was a complete copy of earthly life. The ploughing and sowing, the reaping and threshing, filled up much of the time. They sailed on the streams, they sat in arbours, they played games; but there is no hint of sleeping or resting, the day seems to be eternal. On the contrary in the tomb equipment painted on the earlier coffins the head rest is continually shown, and it is frequent as an amulet in later times. The most essential idea of Osiris is as the god of renewed life, renewal of vegetation, and the god whose own life was renewed. The careful preservation of the corpse and all its organs seems to have no other purpose but its serving for a renewed life. How this was effected is never stated, except as a magic action, like the transformations of the dead at will into a swallow, a hawk, a crocodile, a phœnix, a lotus, or as various gods. There was thus a familiar idea of transformation, and the renewal of human life seems to be accepted on the same footing.

In the later ages, when Western influences were in contact with Egypt, the detail of the Osiris kingdom is subdued, and there is that vague phrase of the dead "going to Osiris"; the mummy was elaborately provided with a great variety of amulets to ensure its preservation, and to enable it to return to the functions of life. As many as 125 amulets have been found on one body, of course largely repetitions of a few forms. The complications of dogmatism were not acceptable to many Egyptians. In the twelfth dynasty period the simplest forms of prayer or dedication to the "Great God"—that is the local god of the district—were very usual; the primitive wish for the future life was commonly expressed in the prayer for being "with God," after the list of material supplies. Far on, about the end of the kingdom, there is the prayer for "living, belonging to the Great God in the divine underworld." In the revolution of Aten worship the formula on a heart-scarab was, "I grant thy soul to enter into the protection of Aten: receive thou wheat from the altar of the Good Being in the house of Aten." This was the new version of the protection in the boat of Ra, and the food offerings being guaranteed by the gods. Just after this is found an entirely new prayer, not for any material benefits or sustenance, but only for a "sweet heart every day."

The condition of the soul is felt to be the only thing that can be definitely asked from the god; how, or in what way, this will be given is left to the divine mercy.

So far, the purely native monuments show the Egyptian beliefs. But in the Greek period there comes a mass of literature on the views of matter and of man known as the Hermetic books; from the historical allusions in them there is no date possible for their composition later than the Persian age, before the Alexandrine conquest. Some details help to fix the age of the beginning of this series to about 510 B.C. They represent Egyptian thought as influenced by India and Greece, but bitterly opposed to any subjection to Greece; and they are of the greatest value as showing how ideas and expressions were being developed, which were the common stock of the religious world in which Christianity was planted. There are many accounts of the past and future of souls, which show more fully how the Egyptian minds were working.

In the *Kore-Kosmou* souls are said to be imprisoned in the body; they are promised that if sinless they shall dwell in the fields of Heaven, if they are blamable they must continue on earth, and if they sin worse they shall become animals. This is entirely transmigration; the final dissolution of the body provides their

return to the happiness of their first estate. Those who live a blameless life become kings, that they may thus be trained to become gods.

In the *Sermon of Isis to Horus* souls at death are said to return to their proper region, between the moon and the earth. The souls pass through air without friction. There are four strata in this region, the kingly souls highest of all, and the base souls nearest the earth. In the *Definitions of Asklepios* which cannot be later than about 350 B.C., the sun is said to distend the Kosmos, affording birth to all, and when they fail he takes them to his arms again. Around him are the choirs of daimons who influence men: but the soul's *logos* is above the control of daimons; and if a ray of God shines through the sun into the soul, the daimons have no power over it. In the *Perfect Sermon*, written before 340 B.C., when the soul leaves the body, then the judgment and the weighing of merit (the old judgment scene before Osiris) pass into the power of its highest daimon (or chief guardian angel). If pious it is allowed to rest in fit places, if soiled with evil it is driven into the depth, to vortices of air, fire, and water, ever racked with ceaseless pains. Here the idea of transmigration has vanished, and a purgatory is substituted. In the last of these works, the *Shepherd*, senseless men pass into darkness, but the good end of

those who have gained gnosis is to be one with God.

These statements about the fate of the wicked, though influenced by foreign ideas at that time, are based on older beliefs. The earliest detailed statement about transmigration of souls is in Herodotus; and although a couple of generations had then elapsed since Indian influence came in with the Persian conquest, it is hardly likely that the Egyptian views would have been much changed by that time. Herodotus states that "the Egyptians were the first who asserted the doctrine that the soul of man is immortal, and that when the body perishes it enters into some other animal, constantly springing into existence; and when it has passed through the different kinds of terrestrial, marine, and aerial beings, it again enters into the body of a man that is born; and that this revolution is made in three thousand years." Later, Plato and Plutarch confirm this. As the representations that we have of the judgment scene are all on papyri or tombs, where the justification of the dead was assumed, there is no first-hand information as to this belief before the Greek period. In the scene of weighing the heart there is usually a monster waiting, whose name is Amam, "the swallower": it has the head of a crocodile, the forepart of a lion, and the hind-part of a hippopotamus. In

another papyrus it is called Shay, "the pig." In one scene of judgment there is represented a pig driven away in a boat. There is no evidence that this monster destroyed the wicked: in swallowing them it may have taken the souls, and thus effected transmigration. Thus the statements of the *Kore-Kosmou*, 510 B.C., and of Herodotus about 450 B.C., may represent the ideas of the earlier Egyptians. By 350 B.C. transmigration had been effaced by the idea of regions of turmoil and darkness. The representations of headless bodies, and of a lake of fire, in the terror of the future, are not connected with the fate of the sinners on earth, but declare the destruction of the spirit enemies met with in passing through the hours of the night.

The dominant belief of the Egyptian, from beginning to end, was that of the certain immortality of the soul, and the future happiness in the company of the gods for all except the positively wicked. Even they were to undergo transmigration, until they had a further chance of better life. The future was not in the darkness and gloom of the Babylonian or Greek or Roman beliefs. The description of the coming life was that of "Coming forth to the day." In the twelfth dynasty the formula on a statuette is a prayer to Osiris "to grant the deceased to come forth, walking happily in the world of stars,

that he may behold the sun coming forth in the horizon." In the representations of the future life, there is no emphasis upon any material pleasures: the conditions of an upright and honourable life on earth are simply transferred to a future life. How the Egyptian reconciled the varied notions which he inherited, we cannot say. The material offerings for the wanderer in the cemetery, the system of model offerings, the kingdom of Osiris, the boat of Ra, all these he believed in more or less together; sometimes one eclipsed the other, yet such continued to be accepted at one place or another. We know enough of incongruities of half-belief not to throw stones at the varied forms of the central faith in immortality, first held and ever held by the Egyptian.

Greek Views of Immortality

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All the life with which our senses acquaint us is confined upon the 'shores of light'—the region of familiar sounds and colours and tangible things, washed by the lower air, whose clouds drift overhead and are caught upon the hillsides. Below, this zone is limited by the lifeless rocks, covering the common womb of living things and the darkness of their common grave; above, it is encompassed by the upper air and the fiery light of heaven. The tops of the highest mountains rise beyond the clouds into the tranquil ether. 'Upon Olympus, they say, is the seat of the gods established for ever. It is not shaken by winds nor ever wet with rain, and the snow comes not nigh; but the clear air spreads without a cloud, and the white light floats over it. There the blessed gods take their pleasure for all their days.' [1]

[1] *Odyssey* vi, 41.

The interval, now inhabited by mortal life, between earth and sky did not always exist. There was a time when 'heaven and earth were one form; but after that they had been sundered from one another, they gave birth to all things and brought them up into the light—trees, and winged things, and creatures that the salt sea breeds, and the race of mortal men.' [1] Life thus had its origin in the marriage of the separated parents, Father Heaven and Mother Earth, mediated by the rain, the seed of the Sky Father, or by the mythical figure of Eros, of Love himself, who, as Æschylus says, draws the holy Heaven to quicken the womb of Earth, and Earth to meet his embrace.[2]

The gods also, the Immortals, are children of this marriage. So 'men and gods are of one kindred; but by difference of power we are utterly divided: man is a thing of nought, but for the gods the bronze floor of heaven stands as a seat unshaken for ever.' [3] The gods, indeed, are not eternal, for they had a beginning; but they are not, like man, under the dominion of time, change, and death.

> Fair Ægeus' son, only to gods in heaven
> Comes no old age, nor death of anything;
> All else is turmoiled by our master Time.[4]

[1] Euripides, *Melanippe, frag.* 484.
[2] Æschylus, *Danaids, frag.* 44.
[3] Pindar, *Nemean* vi, 1.
[4] Sophocles, *Œdipus at Colonus*, trans. Murray.

To be immortal, then—to escape death—is to be divine: the privilege of immortality, even more than 'difference of power,' distinguishes the gods from man. To aspire after immortality is the most dangerous of all ambitions. 'For all alike we die; but our destiny in life is unequal; and if a man lift his eyes to that which is afar off, too weak is he to reach the bronze floor of the gods' high seat. Even so winged Pegasus flung off his lord, when he was fain to come unto the mansions of the sky and to stand, he, Bellerophon, in the conclave of Zeus. For that which is sweet beyond lawful measure there waits an ending very bitter.' [1] 'Mortal man may not go soaring to the heavens, nor seek to wed the Queen of Paphos or some silver-shining Nereid of the sea. There is a vengeance from heaven; happy is he that with cheerful mind weaves the web of one day to its end without a tear.' [2]

This conception of immortality as synonymous with divinity and inaccessible to man was never displaced by the rival doctrine, presently to be considered, that man could become divine and immortal; it persisted in Greece from the age of Homer to the end of paganism. It was not, however, inconsistent with the almost universal belief that some semblance of the living

[1] Pindar, *Isthmian* vii, 42.
[2] Alcman, *Parthenion* i.

man survives bodily death—that 'there is even in the house of Death a spirit or a shade, though the wits dwell in it no more.' [1] A semblance, indeed, rather than a part; *psyche*, originally the 'breath' (*anima*), had come to mean no more than the 'shadow' or the 'image' (*eidolon*). In Homer these phantoms of the strengthless dead, released from the flesh and bones by the funeral fire, 'hover like a dream and flit away' to the darkness by the stream of Ocean that bounds the earth. Once there, they are cut off, irrevocably, from the land of the living, and such existence as they have in the meadow of asphodel cannot be called life. The soul that survives, indeed, is not the intelligence or the moving force; it is less real than 'the man himself,' whom it resembles, less real than the body whose vital energy has perished in the moment of death.

There is a curious likeness, which should be traceable to some common cause, between the Homeric Hades and the Hebrew Sheol, the 'land of darkness,' the 'house appointed for all living,' with no distinction between the righteous and the wicked.[2] Perhaps in both cases, certainly in the Greek, there is reason to suppose that this conception of a collective Hades over-

[1] *Iliad* xxiii, 103.

[2] *Cf.* A. S. Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of Immortality* (1922), Lecture II.

laid, though it never finally superseded, the more primitive notion that the dead man who has received due rites of burial retains some measure of barely sentient existence in the tomb itself, where the best wish of the survivors, expressed in countless epitaphs, is that he may sleep in peace and that the earth may rest lightly upon him: *sit tibi terra levis*. This representation is naturally associated with a cult, in which offerings of food and flowers are evidence of a belief that the dead not only stand in need of nourishment, but also retain some share in the life, some interest in the fortune, of their families. But as memory fades and affection cools, the horror which is the obverse of reverent awe tends to assert itself, and we meet with traces of the world-wide feeling that the dead are unhappy and therefore malevolent, sensitive to any neglect of their dues, and terrible in the persistent vengefulness of an ancient wrath.[1] The Furies, or *Erinyes*, who became the avenging guardians of the natural or moral order of the world, derive their lineage from the outraged and angry ghost. Yet these too, with no violence to traditional feeling, can be invested by Æschylus with a beneficent aspect as the Reverend Goddesses, who still the winds, receive the sacrifice for accomplishment of marriage and for

[1] *Cf.* F. Cumont, *After Life in Roman Paganism* (1922), p. 63.

children, and send up from the underworld the fruits of the earth.[1]

The cult of ancestors as the guardians of morality and the givers of wealth—two attributes of the spirits of Hesiod's Golden Race—generally implies a settled community, tilling the ground and renewing its own life in the vicinity of the ancestral tombs. In early Greece such cults must have been maintained continuously by the indigenous peoples. In the Heroic age, on the other hand, the houses of the individual dead are merged in a collective Hades, which has even been transferred from its proper place underground to the furthest darkness of the west. The duty of man towards the dead is ended with the offices of the funeral pyre. Until the flesh and bones are burned, the spirit uneasily haunts the neighbourhood of the body; and the purpose of the last rites is partly to relieve the survivors of its presence. It is natural to connect the abandonment of the ancestor cult with the conditions of the invading race for whom Homer sang—men who had broken with the ancient sanctities of a settled home. The migrations of the Hebrew people may have something to do with the similar representation of Sheol.

Since the nature and quality of existence after

[1] *Cf.* J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, ch. v.

death are entirely a matter of faith, it is hard to understand why any system of belief should deny to humanity the prospect, beyond the grave, alike of happiness and of the sanction of moral sentiment. Here, it might seem, if anywhere, our thwarted desires, from the highest to the lowest, might well create the promise of realisation. This has, indeed, happened in most of the great religions which have kept an enduring hold upon the human heart; it happened in the mystery religions of Greece itself. The difficulty is to see why it should not be universal. The Indian looks forward to his happy hunting grounds, the Mohammedan to his paradise. Why should Job look for nothing but 'the land of darkness and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as the darkness'? Why should the ghost of Achilles say: 'Seek not to console me for death, glorious Odysseus. I would rather be on earth as the hired servant of another, in the house of a landless man with little to live upon, than be king over all the dead'? Only once does Homer speak of an Elysian Plain at the ends of the earth, where 'life is easiest for men: there is no rain nor snow nor winter storm, but always Ocean sends the breath of the high west wind, blowing cool upon men.' [1] But this counterpart of the

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Since the nature and quality of existence after

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its furthest point the materialistic tendency of the Ionian school. The 'immortal and imperishable' nature of things had been reduced by Anaximenes and his successors to the air, 'from which men and all other animals derive the soul and intelligence they possess.' [1] Atomism reduced the air itself and the other perceptible elements to particles of impenetrable stuff. The atoms which constitute the soul differ from the rest only in respect of their spherical shape and mobility. 'It follows then that the whole nature of the soul is dissolved, like smoke, into the higher air; since we see it is begotten along with the body and grows up along with it and, as I have shewn, breaks down at the same time worn out with age.' [2] Despair of the future is offered as the only remedy for present fear. 'Our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as a mist, that is, driven away with the beams of the sun. Come on, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments, and let no flower of the spring pass by us.' [3]

The question of immortality, then, as distinct from a shadowy survival hardly to be preferred

[1] Simplicius, *Physics* 152, Diogenes of Apollonia.
[2] Lucretius iii, 455, trans. Munro.
[3] *Wisdom*, ii.

divine Olympus is promised only to Menelaus, because he has Helen to wife and is the son-in-law of Zeus. In Hesiod the Islands of the Blest are reserved to the demigods who fought at Thebes and Troy.[1]

No solution, but a further element in the same problem, is presented by the belief, also common to Jew and Greek, in the impassable barrier fixed between gods and men by the jealousy of heaven. In Yahwe and in Zeus, the Father of gods and men, we can discern the projected image of paternal authority and power, recoiling upon man in this jealous assertion of the superior's privilege. Such is the nemesis of anthropomorphism: the more fully human a divinity becomes, the more he acquires the atomic impenetrability of an individual person. His relations with man must then be rigidly external —what Socrates calls 'a kind of traffic between gods and men,' an art of giving to the gods in sacrifice and asking a return in prayer.[2]

Even this intercourse is undermined by philosophic reflection, where necessity allows no place for divine intervention; and the last stage is reached when the Epicurean banishes the gods to a careless beatitude in the intermundane space. The atomism inherited by Epicurus from the last original men of science carried to

[1] *Works and Days*, 166. [2] Plato, *Euthyphro*, 14E.

passion play representing the ravishing and the return of the Corn-maiden, he read some assurance, however vague, of a renewal of life, and received the definite promise of a 'better lot' in the underworld, by grace of the goddesses whose rites he had seen.[1]

It is very significant that in the mystery cults the figure which dominates the typical group of divinities is not the Father, but the Mother—Demeter, Semele, Isis, Cybele—with her child or youthful consort—Persephone, Dionysus, Osiris, Attis. The worshipper is not confronted by the jealous authority that thunders in the height of heaven; he is welcomed by the Earth, the nursing-mother of children,[2] whose kindly fruits are man's wealth (*Plutus*). The name of the Earth-mother is associated with ideas of birth and of rebirth; the analogy of the seed sown in hope of the annual resurrection suggests that to sink into the grave may be only to enter again into the womb: 'that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.'[3] The scheme of all initiation ceremonies, ranging from the tribal initiations of the savage to the sacraments of civilised religion, is built upon the conception

[1] *Hymn to Demeter*, 480; Sophocles, *frag.* 837, Pearson.

[2] *Gê Kourotrophos.*

[3] 1 *Cor.* xv. Initiates of Eleusis must have been among the Corinthians for whom St. Paul wrote.

of a death to the past which is at the same time a rebirth into a fuller life. The prevailing emotion—the 'good hope,' as the Pythagoreans called it—is easily extended to the prospect that lies beyond the natural fact of death.

We cannot tell to what extent the doctrine of Eleusis underwent development during the thousand years which lie between the Hymn to Demeter and the destruction of the sanctuary by Alaric the Goth. We can only be certain that the beliefs and aspirations of individual initiates must have varied very widely with differences of temperament and philosophic culture. Probably the formulas remained vague enough to accommodate them all. Meanwhile, from the sixth century B.C. or earlier, a movement from another quarter is traceable, which crystallised in a scheme of salvation with definite outlines of moral and theological doctrine. The sectaries of this unofficial religion, which came to central Greece from Southern Italy and Sicily, took for their patron saint the legendary Orpheus, who was said to have 'invented' or 'composed' the mystic rites of Dionysus Zagreus, and to have been torn in pieces by the Mænads as the infant god had been torn in pieces by the Titans. The myth told how the Titans had eaten of the dismembered body and then had been blasted by the thunderbolt of Zeus. From their ashes

sprang mankind. Man has thus a dual nature; for though the Titans were evil, they had partaken of the divine flesh, and we, their descendants, accordingly possess a soul of heavenly origin enclosed in a body of dark and evil nature. The myth reflects the consciousness of the divided self; its framers must have known the sense of sin as surely as they found the promise of regeneration in the resurrection or rebirth of their divinity.

The fundamental principle distinguishing the Dionysiac religion from the Olympian is the denial of any impassable barrier between gods and men. The philosophic tradition known as the 'Italian' philosophy because it drew its inspiration from this quarter—a tradition extending from Pythagoras through Plato to Plotinus—declared that 'jealousy has no station in the quire of heaven.' [1] It recognised 'a bond of association uniting us not only to one another and to the gods, but also to the irrational animals; for there is a single spirit pervading the whole order of the world like a vital principle.' [2] This continuity of all life implies that every soul, from the star to the reptile and the plant, is inherently divine and therefore immortal, so that it can mount in the scale of being from the

[1] Plato, *Phædrus* 247A.
[2] Sextus, *adv. math.* ix, 126.

lowest degree to the felicity of the blest. Apotheosis is no longer the proud privilege of kings; the democratic doctrine of transmigration extends to any pure and virtuous soul the promise that it may 'appear at last among men upon the earth as a seer, a poet, a physician, or a prince, and thence spring up as a god exalted in honour, sharing the hearth of the other Immortals and the same table, free from man's woes, from destiny, and from all harm.' [1]

If we trace this conception of identification with God back to its origin in the Thraco-Phrygian cult of Dionysus, we find it rooted in the experience of ecstasy or 'enthusiasm'—names which describe the divine madness alternatively as the liberation of the soul rapt from the body 'out of oneself,' or as the entrance of a universal spirit submerging the bounds of individuality with a flooding sense of communion. This experience, induced by the drinking of wine and by dancing to the wild music of flute and drum, is the core of spiritual value in the orgiastic worship of the Mænads. The doctrine of transmigration, added by the Orphics and adopted by Pythagoras, develops the implication that the soul is neither the perishable sum of the body's vital functions, nor yet a shadowy and unreal double of the physical self, but an

[1] Empedocles, *frag.* 146, 147.

independent substance entering the body as a stranger from without, 'an exile from Heaven and a wanderer,' which can be 'born from time to time in all manner of mortal shapes, passing from one to another of the painful paths of life,' till it finally shakes off the 'alien garment of flesh' and returns to its heavenly source.[1] The soul is of higher value, and therefore more real, than the body, with which 'for certain purposes of punishment the soul is yoked together and buried in it, as in a tomb.'[2] The means of escape is purification, understood at first in the ceremonial sense of abstinence from certain kinds of food and dress and the avoidance of contact with impurities, but moralised later in the doctrine that 'the way of escape lies in becoming as like God as possible, and that means becoming righteous and holy with the help of wisdom.'[3] Thus the history of the soul is framed to the scheme of initiation: earthly life becomes the lesser mysteries of death, the purification which precedes the revelation of the Plain of Truth in another world.

It must not be imagined that the Orphics or even the Pythagorean predecessors of Plato, drew out to the full the consequences of their theology. Possibly the bulk of the Orphic sec-

[1] Empedocles, *frag.* 115, 126.
[2] Philolaus, *frag.* 14.
[3] Plato, *Theætetus* 176.

taries remained mere formalists, content to have performed the rites of the divinities of absolution, and secure of admission to the Banquet of the Saints in Elysium, provided that they wore white garments, shunned contact with birth and burial, and eschewed the eating of things that have a living soul.[1] 'There are many that bear the *narthex*, but few that are one with Bacchus.' They transferred the Homeric Elysium to the underworld, and balanced it by a subterranean purgatory, where 'they plunge the sinners and unrighteous men in a sort of mudpool, and set them to carry water in a sieve.'[2] Upon a lower level we hear of the theurgy of 'strolling soothsayers, who come to the rich man's doors with a story of a power they possess by the gift of heaven to atone for any offence that he or his ancestors have committed, by means of sacrifice and incantations agreeably accompanied by feasting.'[3] But analogous perversions in more recent times may warn us not to judge the worth of the whole image from the feet of clay, however the base material may threaten its stability. We may indeed refrain from any judgment of value and leave undecided the question whether it is good or bad for man to believe in his own apotheosis. It is enough to note the claim recorded

[1] *Cf.* Euripides, *frag.* 472. Confession of the Cretan Initiates.
[2] Adeimantus in Plato, *Republic* ii. [3] Plato, *ibid.*

in the amulets found in Orphic graves. They contain extracts from some lost document resembling the Egyptian Book of the Dead. The departed spirit declares that, though a child of earth as well as of the starry heaven, his race is of heaven alone; and he receives the assurance: 'From man thou hast become god.' At any time after the influx of Eastern doctrines into Hellenism that followed the conquests of Alexander, the reference to the 'starry heaven' might be linked with the Babylonian conception of astral immortality, which occasioned a transference of the abode of the blest from the underworld to the heavenly fires. The soul came to be regarded as a particle of the divine ether which had fallen, through the primal sin, into the sublunary region of change and death. A Pythagorean catechism, of which some fragments survive, states that the Islands of the Blest are the sun and moon.[1]

In Plato and Aristotle the dwelling-place of the unchangeable and divine is removed yet further from the earth to the region that is beyond the outermost heaven or sphere of the fixed stars. We here encounter the notion of eternity first beginning to be conceived, with any degree of clearness, in opposition to the idea

[1] Diels, *Vorsokratiker* 1[4] 358, 18. *Cf.* Cumont, *After Life in Roman Paganism*, Ch. III.

of endless time. In Greek thought time was always associated with motion, and in particular with the revolution of the heavenly bodies. Aristotle even mentions some (probably Pythagoreans) who actually identified time with the heavenly sphere itself.[1] Influenced by this association and by the cyclical recurrence of the solar year—a representation of cardinal importance in agricultural rites—the ancients tended to conceive time as a circle or a sphere, and in that sense as limited, though the revolving motion has neither beginning nor end. Hence it was possible to imagine an immutable condition outside the movement of time. Even in the scientific speculation of the early Ionians we find the picture of the evolving cosmos whirled round in the vortex (*dinos*), while beyond it extends the unchanging circumambient nature, which Anaximander described as immortal, imperishable, divine.[2] Parmenides (about 500–490 B.C.) was the first to announce the unreality of time, as a necessary consequence of the unreality of change and motion. His real Being is unborn and imperishable, 'nor was it ever nor will it be, since it is now all at once, one and continuous.'[3] In this strange form of pantheism the one unmoved Being is not outside the world,

[1] *Physics* Δ, 10. 218 *a* 31.
[2] Aristotle, *Physics* iii, 4.
[3] Parmenides, *frag.* 8.

but itself forms the finite sphere, as the sole reality behind the illusory screen of sensible appearance. But in the mythical proem describing Parmenides' journey to the spiritual world, the chariot and horses, guided by the Sun maidens, carry him to 'the gates of the paths of Day and Night,' as if this world were situated in the 'region above the heaven' visited by the soul-chariots of Plato's kindred allegory.[1] The Orphics, again, have their wheel of birth or becoming, which is the wheel of time serving as the framework of transmigration. In the grave-tablets the soul of the dead man says: 'I have flown out of the sorrowful weary wheel.' Here it is once more indicated that the abode of the divine is beyond the cycle of temporal change. Empedocles, combining Orphic-Pythagorean religion with Ionian science, builds the wheel of becoming into his physical system, setting heaven and hell, the alternating reigns of Love and Hate, at the poles of the circle. He also believed in the escape from the cycle of re-incarnation, and proclaimed that he was already 'an immortal god, mortal no more.'[2]

We have already observed that the idea of identification with God has its psychological root in the experience of ecstasy or enthusiasm, characteristic of Dionysiac religion. The same

[1] Plato, *Phædrus*, 247. [2] *Frag.* 112.

may be said of the concept of Eternity; that is to say, it may be doubted whether this concept would ever have been formed, if states which appear to be timeless had not been actually experienced and taken as a warrant of the intrinsic divinity of the soul. Baron Friedrich von Hügel, after quoting Rohde's imaginative description of the Mænads' dances, continues: 'I would only insist, even more than Rohde, upon the fact that all states of trance, or indeed of rapt attention, notoriously appear to the experiencing soul in proportion to their concentration, as timeless; i.e. as non-successive, simultaneous, hence as eternal. They appear thus to the soul, if not during, at least soon after, the experience. And hence the eternity of the soul is not, here, a conclusion drawn from the apparent God-likeness, in other respects, of the soul when in this condition, but the eternity on the contrary, is the very centre of the experience itself, and is the chief inducement to the soul for holding itself to be divine. The soul's immortality cannot be experienced in advance of death, whilst its eternity, in the sense indicated, is, or seems to be, directly experienced in such "this-life" states; hence the belief in immortality is here derivative, that in eternity is primary.' [1]

[1] F. von Hügel, *Eternal Life*. Edinburgh, 1912, p. 27. Dostoyevsky has given an authoritative description of the timeless experience:

In Greece the timeless experience gave rise to the belief in a distinct form of soul, native to the eternal world. Pindar, in one of his dirges, says

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'He always had one minute just before the epileptic fit (if it came on while he was awake), when suddenly in the midst of sadness, spiritual darkness and oppression, there seemed at moments a flash of light in his brain, and with extraordinary impetus all his vital forces suddenly began working at their highest tension. The sense of life, the consciousness of self, were multiplied ten times at these moments which passed like a flash of lightning. His mind and his heart were flooded with extraordinary light; all his uneasiness, all his doubts, all his anxieties were relieved at once; they were all merged in a lofty calm, full of serene, harmonious joy and hope. But these moments, these flashes, were only the prelude of that final second (it was never more than a second) with which the fit began. That second was, of course, unendurable. Thinking of that moment later, when he was all right again, he often said to himself that all these gleams and flashes of the highest sensation of life and self-consciousness, and therefore also of the highest form of existence, were nothing but disease, the interruption of the normal condition; and if so it was not at all the highest form of being but on the contrary must be reckoned the lowest. And yet he came at last to an extremely paradoxical conclusion. "What if it is disease?" he decided at last. "What does it matter that it is an abnormal intensity, if the minute of sensation, remembered and analysed afterwards in health, turns out to be the acme of harmony and beauty, and gives a feeling, unknown and undivined till then, of completeness, of proportion, of reconciliation, and of ecstatic devotional merging in the highest synthesis of life?" These vague expressions seemed to him very comprehensible, though too weak. That it really was "beauty and worship," that it really was the "highest synthesis of life" he could not doubt. . . . It was not as though he saw abnormal and unreal visions of some sort at that moment, as from hashish, opium or wine, destroying the reason and distorting the soul. He was quite capable of judging of that when the attack was over. These moments were only an extraordinary quickening of self-consciousness—if the condition was to be expressed in one word—and at the same time of the direct sensation of existence in the most intense degree. Since at that

that after the death of the body there survives what he calls 'an image of the life' (*æon*).[1] He declares that 'this alone is from heaven,' and that, though 'it sleeps while the limbs are active,' during slumber it is active itself, revealing to the dreamer visions of judgment after death. In this passage, where Orphic influence is certainly to be traced, a soul or spirit of divine origin and inherent immortality seems to be clearly contrasted with the vital functions of the mortal body, since its activity alternates with theirs. We may read here an early expression of the doctrine, established under the influence of the Platonic school, of the threefold division of man into a divine and immortal spirit (*nous*), a mortal soul (*psyche*), and a body. The spirit and the soul respectively belong by nature to the eternal world of unchanging reality and to the world of transient becoming in time. Im-

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second, that is at the very last conscious moment before the fit, he had time to say to himself clearly and consciously: "Yes, for this moment one might give one's whole life!" then without doubt that moment was really worth the whole of life. . . . "At that moment," as he told Rogozhin . . . "I seem somehow to understand the extraordinary saying that *there shall be no more time*,"' *The Idict*, ch. v, trans. C. Garnett.

[1] *Fragment* 131. James Adam, who illustrates this fragment in *Cambridge Prælections*, 1906, rightly rejects "eternity" as a rendering of *αἰών* here; but I doubt if he is right in taking the words to mean merely the Homeric 'shadow of the living self.' On the meaning of *αἰών cf.* A. C. Pearson, *Verbal Scholarship and the Growth of some Abstract Terms*, Cambridge, 1922, p. 26.

mortality, in this view, no longer means the continuance, in the two portions of time that lie before birth and after death, of a life and consciousness resembling those which fill the interval of mortal existence. It means that the immortal spirit, like Parmenides' Being, 'never was nor will be, since it is now all at once'; its date is the 'stationary now' of eternity, not here or there in the 'flowing now' of time.[1] The mortal soul, on the other hand, the sum of the vital functions entailed by incarnation in a material body, endures only for the span of temporal life. Man as a whole exists in both worlds. As St. Thomas says of the spiritual creature, in respect of those affections and acts of intelligence in which there is succession, he is measured by time; in respect of his vision of glory (or, as Plato would say, of the immutable Ideas), he partakes of eternity. To this St. Thomas adds a third mode of measurement, *ævum* (the Latin equivalent of *æon*), which is 'between eternity and time, partaking of both,' and 'has not in itself a before and after, but can be conjoined with them.' By this is measured the spiritual creature in respect of its native being. The Platonic *nous* might claim this mode of duration, which the Christian doctor

[1] Boetius, *de cons* v. *nunc* fluens facit tempus, *nunc* stans facit eternitatem.

attributes to the heavenly bodies and the angels.[1]

St. Thomas no doubt had in mind that passage where Aristotle speaks of eternity as belonging to the things of the region 'outside the heavens,' where is neither place, nor void, nor time. 'They cannot change nor be affected in any way, but they live the best and most self-sufficing life throughout all their duration (*æon*).' *Æon*, he says, is derived from *aiei on*, 'being for ever'; it denotes the immortal and divine, 'from which are derived, with divers degrees of clear expression or of dimness, the being and life of all other things.'[2] The only activity possible to the divine being is the activity of the thinking mind, which 'becomes its object in the act of comprehending it,' so that object and subject are identical. 'That God should be always in that good state in which we sometimes are, is a wonderful thing; still more wonderful, if his state be better than ours. And it is better. And life belongs to God; for the activity of thought is life, and

[1] *Summa*, Qu. x, Art. v. Ævum ipsum est medium inter æternitatem et tempus, utroque participans. . . . Tempus habet prius et posterius; ævum autem non habet in se prius et posterius, sed ei conjungi possunt; æternitas autem non habet prius neque posterius, neque ea compatitui. Creaturæ spirituales quantum ad affectiones et intelligentias, in quibus est successio mensurantur tempore . . . quantum vero ad eorum esse naturale, mensurantur ævo; sed quantum ad visionem gloriæ, participant æternitatem.

[2] *De Cælo* I, ix.

God is that activity; his essential activity is an eternal life that is the best possible life. We say, then, that God is a living being, eternal and most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God; for this is God.' [1]

The creative period of Greek thought ends with the injunction to achieve immortality and divinity in the exercise of speculative reason. 'Such a life as this is higher than the measure of humanity; not in virtue of his humanity will man lead this life, but in virtue of something in him that is divine; and by as much as this something is superior to his composite nature, by so much is its activity superior to the rest of virtue. If the Reason (*nous*) is divine in comparison with man, so is the life of Reason divine in comparison with human life. We ought not to listen to those who exhort man to keep to man's thoughts, or a mortal to the thoughts of mortality, but, so far as may be, to achieve immortality and do what man may to live according to the highest thing that is in him; for little though it be in bulk, in power and worth it is far above all the rest.' [2]

The mystic gospel of identification with God has here reached a perilous summit. 'Not in virtue of his humanity will man lead this life'—the words ring with a double sound. A doubt

[1] *Metaphysics* xii, 7.
[2] Aristotle, *Ethics* x. 7.

arises whether the achievement of divinity in the timeless contemplation of truth is not an ideal that overreaches the aspirations of common humanity. Is this philosophic apotheosis even consistent with the ends that make immortality an object of desire? The author of the *Timæus* tells us that only 'some small portion of mankind' shares with the gods in the possession of Reason (*nous*).[1] Aristotle left the question of individual or personal survival in obscurity, and, in his less popular writings, gave little encouragement to ordinary hopes. Centuries later, Platonism, revived in its most religious form—the system of Plotinus—fell back upon faith and rescued the individuality of human spirits from absorption in a universal Mind. 'A pleasant life is theirs in heaven; they have the truth for mother, nurse, real being, and nutriment; they see all things, not the things that are born and die, but those which have real being; and they see themselves in others. For them all things are transparent, and there is nothing dark or impenetrable, but everyone is manifest to everyone internally, and all things are manifest; for light is manifest to light. For everyone has all things in himself and sees all things in another; so that all things are everywhere and all is all and each is all, and the glory

[1] Plato, *Timæus* 51E.

is infinite.' [1] So Plotinus; but it must not be forgotten that a neo-Platonist in the last centuries of paganism was as rare as a neo-Hegelian in the present day. Meanwhile the Stoics added nothing to the doctrine of immortality, except the confusion caused by disagreement among themselves. In the popular mind every form of belief noticed in this chapter subsisted in unreconciled discord. The common man saw nothing but a twilight of uncertainty, in which the perpetual Light of the apocalypt—*requiem æternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis*—struggled vainly with the perpetual Night of the Roman lover—

> *Soles occidere et redire possunt;*
> *Nobis, cum semel occidit brevis lux,*
> *Nox est perpetua una dormienda.*

[1] Plotinus, *Ennead* v, 8, 4, translated by Dr. Inge, whose *Philosophy of Plotinus* (1918) vol. ii, should be consulted on this subject.

Immortality in Indian Thought

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It is particularly interesting and important to ascertain what beliefs have been held regarding immortality in India. For here we have a civilisation the literary evidence for which goes back to an earlier period than that of any other Aryan-speaking people. The spiritual life here recorded has been continuous for more than 3,000 years, ever since the conquering Aryan tribes made their way into the territory of the North-West some 1,500 years B.C. and subsequently imposed their culture on the whole sub-continent. The mental development of the Indo-Aryans has, moreover, remained isolated, being altogether separated from that of the rest of the world, for at least the first 2,000 years. Even the Muhammadan invasion, the earliest of a permanent character, which began about 700 A.D. and ended with the almost complete

conquest of India three centuries later, exercised practically no influence on the course of Hindu beliefs.

The evidence furnished by a comparison of the *Avesta*, the sacred book of the Ancient Persians, shows that when these closely cognate peoples still formed one single nation, they already composed metrical hymns. The Indians, when they branched off from the Persians and migrated into India, continued to produce such poetry. More than 1,000 hymns are preserved as a collection called the *Rigveda*. That it was composed in the Punjab, the territory of the Five Rivers, is proved by the geographical data which the hymns contain and the flora and fauna which they mention. The religion which the *Rigveda* embodies is a polytheistic one. The hymns for the most part consist of invocations of many gods who represent personified powers of nature and appear in various stages of anthropomorphism. As the hymns are chiefly expressions of prayer and praise, they contain ample material showing what those ancient Indian poets held to be the spiritual nature of the gods. The funeral hymns, together with stray allusions elsewhere in the *Rigveda*, furnish evidence as to what the poets believed regarding the human soul. It is our task here to extract from Indian literature the ideas about immor-

tality, both of gods and men, held since the earliest phase of Indian religion.

The true gods of the *Rigveda*, which may be called the Old Testament of the Indians, are represented there as glorified human beings, inspired with human motives and passions.

It was a settled view that the gods had a beginning. They are constantly stated to have been the children of Heaven and Earth. In a cosmogonic hymn they are said to have come into being from the one primordial substance, but in the philosophical hymns their origin is mostly connected with the element of water. Again, certain individual gods or groups of gods are spoken of as having been begotten by others. Earlier gods, too, are expressly referred to in several passages. In the *Atharvaveda*, a collection of hymns later than the *Rigveda*, some gods are spoken of as fathers, others as sons; ten gods are, moreover, referred to as having existed before the rest; but here they are also said to have arisen from the non-existent. In the ritualist, later Vedic works called Brāhmanas, Prajāpati, Lord of Creatures, who by this time had come to be regarded as the chief of the gods, is stated to have created the gods. So, too, in cosmogonic or philosophical hymns and in the ritual treatises the gods are described as having been created, but elsewhere as having been born

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like men. Although they are always supposed to have had a beginning, they are at the same time regarded as immortal. Of what nature was this immortality thought to be? The gods were not regarded as immortal from the time they came into existence. The *Atharvaveda* in fact expressly states that they were originally mortal. The Brāhmanas also observe this of the gods as a body and of the individual deities Indra, the Thunderer, Agni, Fire, and Prajāpati, the Creator. This is also the implication in the *Rigveda*. For here the gods are declared to have had immortality bestowed on them by the deities Savitar and Agni; they are also said to have attained it by drinking Soma, the draught of immortality (*amrita* etymologically akin to the Greek *ambrosia*). Indra is further stated to have become immortal by the practice of austerity; and in later Vedic texts the gods as a whole are pronounced to have attained divine rank by the same means.

It is characteristic of the gods that they are unaging and ever young. Their life is described as being spent in heaven or the third and highest heaven, where they lead a joyous existence, exhilarated by the draught of immortality. The use of the word *amrita*, "undying," "immortal," indicates that the gods were regarded in the earliest phase of Indian civilisation as

essentially immortal, though they may not have been so in remote ages. Primarily an adjective, often qualifying the word *deva*, "god," it comes to be frequently used as a substantive meaning "an immortal," "a god." In the neuter the word signifies "the immortal," that is, the totality of the gods, then also the "drink of the immortals," and "immortality."

There is no evidence to show whether the Vedic poets regarded the immortality of the gods as absolute. It is, however, probable that they considered it to be vaguely unending, though it had a beginning. According to the post-Vedic view it was limited to a cosmic age, at the end of which the world is destroyed and relapses into chaos.

We can now proceed to enquire what was the view of the earliest Veda regarding the human soul and its fate after death. The evidence for this is to be found chiefly in the five funeral hymns of the *Rigveda*. It is clear that the beliefs held concerning the future life were largely influenced by the funeral customs prevailing at the time. Death apparently seldom engaged the thoughts of the Vedic poets except at funerals. Though burial was practised to some extent in the earliest Vedic period, cremation was the usual way for the dead to reach the next world. The later Vedic ritual practically

knew this method only. For besides the bones and ashes of adults, only young children and ascetics were interred. Agni, the god of fire, is described as taking the corpse to the fathers and the gods in the other world and conducting the mortal to the highest immortality. He leads men to the loftiest place of the sun, to the highest heaven, to the world of the righteous, whither the ancient, earliest seers have passed away. A goat and a horse are sacrificed to precede the corpse on its way to the highest abode. The sacrificial goat which announces the deceased to the fathers traverses a gulf of thick darkness before reaching the third vault of heaven, which is also described as the inmost recess of the sky, the home of eternal light, or as the highest region of the sun. Pious men are said to enjoy bliss in that dear dwelling, the highest step of Vishnu, who is one of the forms of the sun-god. Heaven is regarded as the reward of those who practise rigorous penance, of heroes who risk their lives in battle, and above all of those who bestow liberal sacrificial gifts.

The life in heaven is passed among the gods, particularly in the presence of Yama, the chief of the dead, and of Varuna, the highest ethical figure in the Vedic pantheon. Here the deceased is united with a glorified body, and sees again

father, mother and sons, wife and children. Complete in body and limbs, he is free from all ailments. In this world of eternal light and swift waters the life is one of satiety, the fulfilment of all desires, and beatitude. Here are ponds filled with *ghee* (clarified butter), and streams flowing with milk, honey and wine. The sound of the lute and of songs is enjoyed in the shade of a wide-spreading tree.

Thus the life of the righteous dead in heaven was clearly regarded as one of indolent material bliss, in which, exempt from all frailties, the deceased were associated with the gods, and devoted themselves to sensuous joys. It was a corporeal life, like that left behind on earth, but a glorified one subject to no defects.

On the other hand, the ideas about hell are so faint in the earliest Veda, that in the opinion of the great Vedic scholar Roth, the religion of that period knows nothing of an abode of the wicked, who were supposed to be annihilated by death. Yet there seem to be traces of a belief in some kind of hell. Thus there is a passage in which the gods Indra and Soma are besought to dash evil-doers into the abyss, into bottomless darkness, so that not one of them may escape. The evidence, however, cannot be said to go beyond the conception of a dark underground abode for the wicked. Such an idea was prob-

ably connected with the old custom of burial. But in the *Atharvaveda* and in an Upanishad (as the theosophical appendages to the ritual Brāhmanas were called), the belief in a regular hell is beyond doubt. The former speaks of the house below, the abode of female goblins and sorceresses, as contrasted with the heavenly world, the realm of Yama. To this underground region the murderer is consigned. It is several times described as lowest or black darkness, and once at least as a place of torment. But it is not till the period of the ritual treatises called Brāhmanas, which are subsequent to the Vedas, that the notion of future punishment appears plainly developed. The doctrine here is that after death, all, both good and bad, are born again in the next world, and are recompensed according to their deeds, though nothing is said as to the eternity of reward or punishment. One Brāhmana further states that every one is born again after death and is weighed in a balance, being rewarded and punished according as his works are good or bad.

The Vedic description of the life in heaven implies that it is regarded as one of indefinite duration. This is corroborated by the statements made about the early fathers, who made the ancient paths by which the recent dead go to join them, who lead the same life as the gods,

and who are paid almost divine honours. Like the gods, they receive oblations as their food, which, however, is distinguished from the portion of the gods. They are worshipped and are entreated to hear, intercede for, and protect their votaries. The *Atharvaveda* actually calls the fathers immortal and even speaks of them as gods. Cosmical actions like those of the gods are also sometimes attributed to the fathers. Thus they are said to have adorned the sky with stars and to have placed darkness in the night and light in the day. But the path of the fathers is distinguished from that of the gods, and in a Brāhmana the heavenly world is contrasted with that of the fathers.

The Vedic conception of the nature of the human soul that enters the condition of immortality in heaven, emerges best from the allusions contained in the funeral hymns of the *Rigveda*. We have seen that fire seemed to destroy the earthly body, though the real personality was thought to survive and to be imperishable. This is based on a primitive belief that there was a soul capable of separation from the body, even during unconsciousness, and of continued existence even after its complete separation from the body after death. The usual term denoting this animating entity is in the *Rigveda* called *ātman*, "breath," and *asu*, "spirit," which

express physical vitality, and *manas*, "soul," as the seat of thought and emotion, which at the time of the *Rigveda* seems to have been regarded as dwelling in the heart. Many passages show that life and death were supposed to depend on the continuance in, or departure from, the body of the vital principle (*asu* or *manas*). The term "spirit-leading" (*asunīti*) is used to express the guidance by Agni of the soul on its way after death from this world to the next. Here the soul must have been regarded as retaining its personal identity. For it is invoked, after reaching heaven, by the designation of the individual it represented on earth as "father," "grandfather," or some other ancestor. But these early poets were incapable of conceiving the immortality upon which the soul now entered as a purely spiritual one. For it continues to lead a corporeal existence in heaven, having re-united with its old body refined by the power of Agni. The conception of the latter may have been like that of the subtile body of the later Indian philosophy. From what has been said it appears that in the view of the Vedic poets divine immortality was a qualified one, having a beginning and possibly an end; while human immortality began only when the soul of the righteous after death reached heaven, where its existence was indefinitely prolonged

like that of the gods. In both cases it was a state of material, not spiritual bliss. Research has shown that by the end of the Vedic period and before the rise of Buddhism about 500 B.C., a profound change had taken place both in the social organisation and in the religious views of the Indo-Aryans. Two features had by then been stamped on their civilisation which have ever since marked it off from that of the rest of the world. These were the caste system on the one hand and the doctrine of transmigration on the other. The roots of the former can be traced in the Vedas, those of the latter in the Brāhmanas. Together they have dominated Indian civilisation ever since, for some 2,500 years. The sixth century B.C. thus constitutes an epoch of the utmost importance in the history of Indian thought and institutions; for it forms the main dividing line between the two parts of that history regarded as a whole. It is only with the former aspect of Indian civilisation that we are here concerned. The amazing elaboration of ritual which the worship of the gods had reached in the Brāhmanas and which Andrew Lang somewhere describes as the sacerdotage of religion, had turned the thoughts of the most intellectual spirits of the age away from a highly mechanical system and driven them to speculate on a more satisfying means of salvation. For

this purpose the theosophical treatises called Upanishads, which are attached to the Brāhmanas, are chiefly concerned with discussing the nature of the divine soul, now the centre of interest as compared with the pantheon of the Vedas. The predominant conclusion resulting from these discussions is that there is one supreme impersonal soul called Brahma which is immanent in the world as its body. The individual human soul obtains salvation by absorption in this world soul, and its consciousness then ceases. But the union of the individual soul with the supreme soul can only be accomplished as the result of acquiring the knowledge that the two are identical. Nor can it be consummated till the individual soul has undergone, in an almost endless series of lives, full retribution for the various deeds (*karma*) performed in previous existences. This doctrine of re-incarnation, unknown to the Vedas, first begins to appear in a Brāhmana where the statement occurs that those who do not perform religious rites with correct knowledge are born again after their decease and repeatedly become the food of death. This means in other words the rise of a consciousness that wrong deeds done in this life ought to be punished in future existences. We have seen that the Vedic poets when they turned their minds to the next life contemplated

the joys of heaven almost exclusively, and hardly gave a thought to the fate of the wicked. The doctrine of *karma* or retribution grew up with that of transmigration and became a necessary element in it: for it satisfied the sense of justice which demanded retribution in another existence for deeds which evidently often lacked such requital in the present life; misfortune or prosperity being often clearly seen to be caused by no action done during this existence. The theory of *karma* was gradually elaborated so as to regulate the course of every future existence, which is good or bad according to a man's deed, and in which every individual passes into a heaven or hell, or into the bodies of men or animals or into plants on earth, where he is rewarded or punished for all deeds committed in a previous life. The course of *karma* came to be regarded like the operation of a natural law from which there is no escape. A passage in one of the epics expresses this in a more homely way: "The deed previously done follows after the doer as among a thousand cows a calf finds its mother." But though past action governs everything with inexorable necessity, the theory of *karma* contains the valuable ethical principle that every man is the architect of his own fate by regulating his future action. But release from future existences, or salvation, cannot be

produced by merit alone; it is brought about by saving knowledge, which breaks into life independently, destroys the subsequent effects of works which would otherwise bear fruit in future existences, and thus puts an end to transmigration. It cannot, however, influence those works which have already begun to mature. The present life therefore continues from the moment of enlightenment till definite salvation is attained at death, just as the potter's wheel goes on revolving for a time after the completion of the pot. But no merit or demerit results from acts done after enlightenment or "conversion" as it would be called in the West. In this condition the individual soul, at death, is absorbed in the world-soul and continues to exist in unconsciousness for ever.

There is perhaps nothing so striking in the history of civilisation as that a fantastic theory like that of transmigration combined with retribution, to demonstrate which no philosophical attempt was ever made, took such irresistible hold of the Indian mind as to have been considered self-evident for 2,500 years by every philosophical school or religious sect in India, excepting only the Chārvākas, or materialists. By the acceptance of this doctrine the Vedic optimism, which looked forward to a life of endless happiness in heaven, was transformed

into a pessimistic dread of an interminable series of existences leading from one death to another. It seems not improbable that the Aryan settlers received the first impulse in the direction of the transmigration theory from the aboriginal inhabitants of India. Among half-savage tribes there is a wide-spread belief that the soul after death passes into the trunks of trees and the bodies of animals. Thus the Sonthals of India are said even at the present day to hold that the souls of the good enter into fruit-bearing trees. But among such races the notion of transmigration does not go beyond a belief in the continuance of human existence in animals and trees. If, therefore, the Indo-Aryans borrowed this idea from the aborigines, it was they who elaborated out of it the theory of an unbroken chain of existences inseparably linked with the moral principle of requital.

The crude and material Vedic conception of immortality we find replaced in this epoch by a far more mature and abstract one, the result of an intensified power of philosophical thought. For the personal pantheon of the Vedas has been substituted the one purely impersonal world-soul, an eternal spirit without beginning or end. Instead of the individual soul of the Vedas, which has a beginning and after death passes to a continuous existence in a material heaven, we

meet with an entity which after undergoing a moralized, beginningless and almost unending series of re-incarnations, finally, at the end of its last incarnation, becomes merged in the world-soul and remains, thus united, immortal, but in a state of unconsciousness. This view, embodying the main teaching of the Upanishads, was in later centuries developed into the system of philosophy called Vedānta, which was completed (*c.* 800 A.D.) by the great commentator Sankara with the addition of the doctrine of *Māyā* or cosmic illusion. According to this the whole phenomenal world is a product of *Māyā*, which is caused by "ignorance," so that the world-soul, the impersonal Brahma, is the sole existing reality. This is the philosophical system which has had by far the greatest number of Hindu adherents down to the present day. But it is far too abstract, especially in its conception of the world-soul, to be grasped except by the few intellectuals in a population 85 per cent. of which even now is agricultural and illiterate. Theistic sectarian modifications of this system took its place among the people. Before turning to these it is advisable to consider what orthodox or heterodox views in India arose in the early years of the new era regarding immortality. The monistic theory of the early Upanishads aroused the antagonism of the

adherents of the Sānkhya system of philosophy, the beginnings of which are probably pre-Buddhistic. Its teaching is entirely dualistic, as it admits only two things, both without beginning and end, but essentially different: matter on the one hand, and an infinite plurality of individual souls on the other. The saving knowledge which is here assumed to deliver from the misery of transmigration, consists in recognising the absolute distinction between soul and matter. The world is maintained to be real, and that from all eternity; for the existent cannot be produced from the non-existent. The world is described as developing according to certain laws out of primitive matter. The method followed by this system is particularly interesting because it rises from the known elements of experience to the unknown by logical demonstration till the ultimate cause is reached. But what concerns us here is the doctrine held by this school regarding the nature of soul. As to a supreme god who creates and rules the universe, his existence is totally denied as unnecessary and in fact irreconcilable with the system. For the unconscious matter of nature is declared to contain within itself from the beginning the power of evolution, the course of which is determined exclusively by *karma*. The atheism of the system was defended by its adherents with the declaration

that the origin of evil presents an insoluble problem to the theist, because a god who has created and rules the world could not possibly escape from the reproach of cruelty and injustice. On the other hand, individual souls exist, without beginning or end, in infinite number. There is no difference between these souls in themselves, for they have no attributes or qualities, all their mental operations, when they are embodied, being carried on by the mechanical processes of the internal organs, that is, by matter. The principle of personality and identity is supplied by the subtile or internal body, which, consisting mainly of the inner organs, surrounds and is made conscious by the soul. This internal body, being the vehicle of merit and demerit, which are the basis of transmigration, accompanies the soul on its wanderings from one gross body to another, whether the latter be that of a god, a man, an animal or a tree. Conscious life is invariably associated with pain, in which pleasure is included by this peculiarly pessimistic philosophy. When salvation, which is the absolute cessation of pain, is obtained, the internal body is dissolved into its material elements, and the soul, becoming finally isolated, continues to exist individually but in absolute unconsciousness. The Sānkhya was acknowledged as an orthodox system of Hindu

philosophy because it did not reject the supremacy of the Brahmin caste and the authority of the Veda. But these two conditions were rejected by the two heterodox philosophical religions of Buddhism and Jainism, which arose contemporaneously in Northern Central India towards the end of the sixth century B.C. They resemble the Sānkhya system in all their main outlines. The theory has therefore been advanced that that system was their source. Their fundamental doctrine is that life is nothing but suffering. The aim of both is to redeem mankind from the misery of mundane existence by the annihilation of desire, with the aid of renunciation of the world and the practice of unbounded kindness towards all creatures. Both acknowledged the existence of the lower and ephemeral gods of Brahmanism, but what most concerns us here, is that both, like the Sānkhya, denied the existence of an eternal supreme Deity. As to the individual soul, the Jaina view is quite similar to that of the Sānkhya. After passing through innumerable transmigrations it finally attains, by the correct kind of knowledge, to salvation (*nirvāna*), after which it dwells apart for ever, completely isolated from worldly existence. Buddhism on the other hand denied the existence of the individual soul also. It is a testimony to the irresistible hold the theory of

transmigration had taken of the Indian mind that Buddha adopted it without question, though he did not believe in a soul to migrate. Again, salvation according to his system logically meant complete annihilation; but when asked, Buddha himself refused to decide the question whether *nirvāna* meant total extinction or an unending state of unconscious bliss. The latter view would have been identical with the Vedāntic conception of Brahma, in which the individual soul is merged on attaining salvation; but it would be illogical in Buddhism, which acknowledges neither an individual nor a supreme soul.

In Buddhism, which after an existence of more than a thousand years in India, finally disappeared from its native land, its original doctrine regarding the conditions after death was too abstract to satisfy the cravings of the ordinary man and soon came to be modified. Similarly the impersonal pantheism of the Upanishads, which was philosophically elaborated in the Vedānta system, became a personal pantheism, associated with a partially transformed polytheism, in Hinduism, from the centuries preceding our era down to the present day.

The earliest form of this new religion we find represented in the great epic called the *Mahābhārata*, which assumed its present form probably

about 400 A.D. Here the figures of the Vedic gods still appear, but Vishnu and Siva, who formerly occupied quite a subordinate position, have now attained a pre-eminent rank, which they have held ever since. They are superimposed upon the older worship of Brahma in such a manner that, though they are still different gods, each in turn represents the All-god. The Vishnuite form of this personal pantheism is glorified in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the "Song of the Blessed one," the most famous poem in Sanskrit literature, imbedded in the *Mahābhārata* as an episode of that epic. Here the *tad* "that," the neuter pronoun which in the Upanishads is used to designate the absolute *brahma*, always appears as the personal He to express Krishna, Vishnu's Avatar or incarnation. Immortality is obtained in "heaven" by doing one's duty without attachment to the fruits of action, and being thus delivered from the bonds of rebirth. But it is otherwise also described as entry into or absorption in the supreme soul. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* there first appears in its developed form the doctrine of *bhakti*, or faithful devotion to the deity, which became the key-note of all the popular sectarian forms of worship which grew up in later centuries and have prevailed down to the present day. Faith now took the place of knowledge which, accord-

ing to all the philosophical systems, was necessary for the attainment of absorption in the supreme soul, that is, immortality.

In the epic *Mahābhārata*, in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* is an episode, we find the two Vedic gods Vishnu and Rudra (now generally called Siva), holding a position of predominance, shared by Brahmā, the father-god of the previous period. They are still distinguished from one another, without even forming any kind of recognized group. But in the period following the Great Epic, that is from about the fifth century A.D. onwards, to which belong the sectarian secondary epics called Purānas, each of these three gods, though Brahmā is here of comparatively little account, becomes the centre of exclusive sectarian devotion. All three combined now come to be regarded in the light of a Trinity in which each deity is equal to each of the other two, and each represents the Supreme Being. Beside the Trinity, the old pantheon, somewhat modified by the disappearance of some and the addition of other deities, continued to be acknowledged and worshipped. It is impossible here to follow the ramifications of the two main sects of the Vishnuites and the Sivaites, or of the separate worship of such deities as the elephant-headed Ganapati, Skanda the god of war, Sūrya the sun-god, and Hanuman

the monkey-god. Suffice it to say that modern Hinduism is still a polytheistic religion like that of the oldest Veda to which it goes back. But it is more specialised by being devoted to the worship of particular gods, chiefly of one of the two who are pre-eminent, and by being qualified by the popular theism resulting from the philosophic pantheism of the Upanishads which arose before the spread of Buddhism. It thus combines the views of immortality which prevailed in the two phases through which Indian religion has passed during a period of more than three thousand years.

Hebrew and Apocalyptic Conceptions of Immortality

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The mourning customs of old Israel prove that the people, like all early peoples, believed in the continued existence of the spirit after death; they also give evidence of the prevalence of a cult devoted to the dead. The ultimate place of the departed was Sheol, which was conceived as a vast grave in the depths of the earth. Into this all spirits without exception were gathered. Certain distinctions prevailed among them, but these were either the same as had existed in their lifetime or were due to accidents at burial. There was no reversal of conditions in Sheol, and especially there was no reversal on the ground of moral conduct. The conditions of earth were continued, except that all life was lowered in quality. Life in Sheol was a shadowy existence, cut off from all the interests which made

up life on earth, and in particular cut off from all relation to Yahweh.

Yet this cessation of all relation to Yahweh did not imply that His power was confined to the upper world. He was able to revive the dead, if He would; [1] only He did not choose to do so, unless in exceptional cases. A prophet [2] could say that even if men tried to find refuge from God in Sheol, "thence shall mine hand take them." Sheol was not without His reach, and the dead there did not pass under the control of another deity.

This was the background against which the revealed religion of Israel, its Yahweh faith, was set, and in one form or another it persisted to the end. Now, on one side the higher religion could have no quarrel with the idea of the continuance of life after death. So far as life of a kind was believed to continue in Sheol, there was nothing in the thought to offend. The one place where at first the higher faith came into collision with the earlier forms of belief was in connection with the people's mourning customs; and here it made a significant difference. All these customs which implied no more than the belief in a continuance of the spirit after death were quietly left alone; but every practice which seemed to suggest the belief in any other god

[1] Deut. xxxii, 39. [2] Amos ix, 2.

than Yahweh having power in Sheol, or which could be construed to mean a cult connected with the dead, was put under the ban. These were proscribed as emphatically as the arts of necromancy which implied the possibility of consulting the dead or the powers which presided over death. Yahweh alone must be acknowledged by the Israelite, whether in life or in death.

On the other hand, it was obvious that the higher religion could not be finally satisfied with the thought of a life after death which simply maundered on without ever reaching any moral end. Mere existence without spiritual content and without moral issue, could not ultimately fulfil the greatness of a faith which was teaching Israel that its life on earth became full of enduring content as soon as it accepted the standards and served the purposes of Yahweh. The higher faith had no real interest in the thought of continuing to exist for ever, unless existence meant something more than the vague, half-personal, half-conscious continuance in Sheol. The two conceptions of life were not so much contradictory; but they represented different ideas of life, moved on different planes and had no real point of contact.

What the higher religion needed to do was to think out what was implied for the personal life

in its faith in a God who had a purpose in all His creation, and who revealed this to His creatures that they might welcome and live by it. Only it was slow to develop its own definite teaching on the great subject. Partly this may have been due to the fact that the leaders of the people in spiritual things needed first to bend their whole strength to fill the national life with the sense of the uniqueness and the sufficiency of Yahweh, and to convince men that life on this side of time was only full and worthy when it accepted His standards and sought to serve His will. The community claimed and received the first attention from Israel's religious teachers; and the individual was left unshepherded. Partly also it was due to the fact that Israel in its great religious minds was never given to speculation. Its religious thinking was rooted continually in experience. Devout men, who held firmly the faith in a God who revealed His will as a guide and inspiration of conduct, were bringing its cardinal principles to bear on the life men lived in the flesh. They were insisting that the divine standards were the only ones which could give men foothold in this unstable world. The question of the future could wait till men, who had found the depth of their relation to God and the value which a life lived in that relation gave to the soul which had com-

mitted itself to it, found that this relation, being the profoundest thing in the world, could not be brought to an end by the accident of time.

But, whatever were the reasons for the situation, it is clear that in old Israel there were many ardent adherents of Yahweh, who found in their relation to their God that which made life real to them and yet who dumbly acquiesced in the view that, when this life was over, they passed away, not only from the sweet sun and from human fellowship, but from the conscious presence of God. Thus several of the psalmists [1] limit their expectation of God's presence and help to this side of time. When they pass away out of life, they pass out of the conscious care of their God. At times they say this quietly without a whimper. Indeed, since man's life is at once so short and so futile, the author of Ps. xc prays for grace not to spend its few days in folly, but to win from it what alone it can give, a wise heart.

Such an attitude may seem to us almost incredible in its calm resignation, but we need to recall to mind the amazing power of resignation in the Jew and the content of what the men believed. Faith sustains, not in virtue of its limitations, but of its content; and the men's faith was full of rich, positive content. The

[1] *Cf.* e.g. Ps. xc, 1–12, and more definitely xxx, 9.

writer of Ps. xc, e.g. believed himself to be in close personal relation to God, for he could pray to Him, and he expected an answer. What he needed was divine guidance on the one sure path through this brief and unstable world. There was such a path, and into it God brought the wayward, stumbling feet of men who looked to Him for guidance, for God would give the suppliant a wise heart. But such a way, revealed in answer to a man's prayer, could not lead down into the *cul-de-sac* of Sheol. The implications of that calm, clear faith must unfold themselves to men who held it.

The movement followed two main lines—what such a faith implies for the continuance of the soul which in this life can find God, and what a God who brings the soul into conscious relation to Him must do for its salvation. In the end these run into one, but, for clearness of thought, can be studied separately, as they are represented in the psalmists and prophets respectively.

Thus the prophets approach everything from the side of God. In all he does, God does not act capriciously, but has a purpose which is the expression of His nature. In His sovereign grace He chose Israel in order that the nation might do His will. But Israel, as a nation, failed to fulfil the will of its Creator. In the

interests of the end for which He brought the nation into being Yahweh rejected Israel. He threw aside His chosen instrument. But the divine end itself, for which Israel was chosen, could not be fully served by the mere rejection of an imperfect instrument. It must find some more fitting means to fulfil itself in the world.[1] Besides, there was a reason why the nation failed to fulfil the divine ends. They were seen to be such as no nation, *quâ* nation, could fulfil. The relation into which God entered with men was so intimate and the standards He required them to maintain were so personal that no body of men, who were bound together by the accidents of birth or language or history, could maintain them. Only those who were united by a common conviction could be expected to maintain so great a task.[2] The remnant, i.e. the men who committed themselves deliberately to the divine standards, were God's instruments to serve His ends in the world. As such, they were His in an intimacy of relation which other men could not know. But since the standards they maintained were not of their own creation, but were divine, since they expressed God's mind for the world and so were immutable, when men committed themselves to these, they belonged

[1] That is the message of Amos.

[2] That is the burden of Hosea.

to the world which was beyond time. They were secure and victors over this world of sense.[1] Thus the individual came to his own through the prophetic thought, and through no accident in Israel's history. Only community of conviction could bind together men who were to serve the divine ends by holding aloft in a careless world the divine standards. The nation could supply a bag to hold peas together; only common conviction could make life organic.

To the community, constituted on this basis, God would give the victory. Because the standards they confessed were real, were indeed the only real things in a transient world, these must some day manifest themselves as what they were. In the day of Yahweh, when the present order of the world came to an end and God revealed behind the falsities of time the eternal truth, the kingdom based on these standards should stand up clear. Whatever had obscured them should be done away and whatever opposed them should be destroyed, for, when Yahweh revealed Himself, only that which expressed His mind could continue.

All this, said the prophets, should be on this side of time. In place of this world of moral chaos should come God's world of moral order; there should be a new heaven and a new earth

[1] That is the contribution of Isaiah.

wherein dwelt righteousness. The prophets believed in a new order which was to appear in this earth, because to them God brought the world, as well as man into being, and brought it into being to manifest His will. The fulness of the whole earth was God's glory. It, like man, had for a time been turned aside from its true end through the moral confusion which reigned in it. But in His day, when God revealed Himself, it should all return to the order which was eternal, because it was that which was in God's mind when He created it.

Into this new world, so constituted, should pass all who had lived by its principles. The men who had committed themselves to the divine order as that which alone was real should have freedom of entry into God's new earth. They were already living after its standards; and when the day came and the earth was renewed, they should be confessed as what they were, citizens of the kingdom of God.

But two questions became at once insistent here. What of those who had lived by these standards, and had died before the kingdom was established? Was the mere accident of time to make frustrate the fact that they had lived for, and might even have died for, the principles which were now finally vindicated? And what of the kingdom itself? Was it, with

those who made it up, to be eternal, or was it still to be at the mercy of death? A little apocalypse [1] said boldly that in the consummation Yahweh should swallow up death for ever—the kingdom with all its citizens was eternal. But it also declared that He should not forget the lives which had committed themselves to Him, though they had been mastered by death. The faithful departed should be restored to have their portion in the kingdom for which they had lived. Their trust in its reality should be vindicated, for in the consummation they should be brought back from the dead to share in eternal life.

Now two things are noteworthy here. The first is that, because of the line along which he approached the whole question, the Jew naturally came to believe in the resurrection of the body. Since the kingdom was to be on earth, the dead must be brought back in bodily form in order that they might take part in it. There is no hint in Old Testament teaching of the soul as a divine spark, prisoned for a time in a house of clay and set free from the taint of matter by the liberating hand of death. Death remained to the Hebrew a tremendous reality, even the supreme indignity. Instead he believed in resurrection to a glorified human life through

[1] Isaiah xxiv–xxvii. Note especially xxv, 7, 8; xxvi, 11–21.

the power of God. Yet this does not imply a belief in conditional immortality. The unfaithful dead were left in Sheol, and, while the life in Sheol was merely shadowy, it remained at least life and was not annihilation. But, because the Jew in his thought on the subject was impelled, not by speculation but by religion, he formulated no scheme about the dead in general; what he thought of was the relation of the faithful dead to Yahweh. God could not leave them to Sheol, because He was faithful. Sheol was no fitting place for any except those who had been able to endure life in this world without God.

And that leads to the second feature in this teaching. The share of the faithful in the kingdom was not primarily conceived as an act by which God made good to those who had not received the due reward of their faithfulness during their lifetime. The next world did not supply a mere system of rewards and punishments, for the prophets approached the question from a different angle. To them this was no vindication of the righteous; it was the self-revelation of God. God revealed the principles of His government of the world, and the ends for which He brought it into being. When He thus manifested His eternal purpose He took to Himself all His own.

The psalmists were led to a similar conclusion by a somewhat different road. They came by way of the recognition of what is involved in the life of the soul with God. As, in the chances and changes of this mortal life, they found in the hidden life of the spirit that which gave them the victory over the world, they found themselves set beyond the fear of death; nothing had been able in life to separate them from God, and death was equally impotent. Already the sense of the intimacy of the relation which God made possible for men had won for the individual his place. No nation could love and serve God with the entire surrender which was the demand and the dignity of the religious life. Hence a psalmist became able to write [1] a hymn of what the old theologians called *providentia specialisissima*. The soul which had set its love on God was preserved in all its mortal course from perils by day and night, from dangers by flood and field. Stated with the uncompromising directness which appears in the psalm, the position can be easily laughed out of court with the remark that life contradicts it, since the lion will tear and the snake will sting the godly as readily as the godless. But the perennial truth in the doctrine of a special providence is the infinite worth of a soul which in this transient life can

[1] In Ps. xci.

reach up to God. God has revealed something of Himself to it, and the relation has become so deep and intimate as to be set above the accidents of time. Israel reached this faith in the psalm, though it had not yet applied it to the question whether that relation was at the mercy of death.

The writer of Ps. lxxiii occupies practically the same position. The mystery of this world which seems so indifferent to good and evil, where God might appear to stand aloof and suffer bad men to enjoy what the conscience of His true servants has forbidden them to take, has almost overwhelmed him. He has been seriously tempted to let everything go and fall back to the kind of life with which the godless were content. But he found that for his part he could not do it. He could only have the outward rewards at a price which it was wholly beyond his power to pay; he should need to surrender what alone gave life any meaning to him, his personal relation to God. And he stated what to him was life indeed: "Nevertheless, continually, O Lord, I am with Thee." Such a saying has immortality implicit in it. For the true life was this, and it was already his. So great and sure was it that he could not, for anything which could be offered, give it up. Some day the other side of the truth must reveal itself, viz., that this

life was what God meant for men and that He could not give them up. This life with God alone had reality, and all that was real must endure for ever.

It will be noted that neither psalmist turns his thoughts to the question of immortality, and, however much the second writer's conclusion holds immortality implicitly involved in it, it cannot be said that the conclusion is directly drawn. But the writer of Ps. xvi comes still nearer, in the saying, "Yahweh will not leave his soul to Sheol, nor suffer His saint to see the pit." Again, it must be acknowledged that this may be taken to involve no more than that God will deliver him from the sickness which threatens to end in death and will bring him back from the very portals of the grave. Each reader will interpret the utterance through the preconceptions which he brings to it. But the life about which the psalmist has been speaking is so much more than mere existence—it is a life in the conscious enjoyment of God's favour and one which is capable of the vision of God—that a petition for a little longer period on this side of time seems far too jejune a conclusion. What he is conscious of is that he is in the hands of One who loves life and who makes the life He loves full of rich and significant content. So, if he has not quite spoken out the master-word

of immortality, he has certainly set the convictions which imply it and which alone give it much content and any security, over against the one supreme experience which seems to contradict them, death which threatens to turn all such convictions to nothing. The wall between his thought and the assurance of immortality has worn so thin that it needs no more than a touch to pierce it.

That touch is given in the following psalm. Its writer has again been troubled by the apparent contradiction which life offers to any divine standards and values. Bad men by their success seem to prove that these standards have no real force or foundation. And he has fallen back on the old answer faith offers to such whispers of fear. For himself he can do no other than live by the vision of God; life is empty to him without it, while with it life becomes real. Indeed, its reality is such that nothing can destroy it, for even what seems to bring it to an end shall be proved powerless. Death, when it comes, will be but a sleep and I, when I awake, shall gaze my fill on God.

So large a conclusion from such a slight saying might seem perilous if the utterance stood alone in the psalm, but xlix, 15, e.g., can mean nothing else. Here again the writer is contrasting the lot of the sinner and the saint, but in his case the

representation of the fate of sinners turns entirely round their final state, not their temporary condition; death shall be their shepherd. Hence it is natural to conclude that, when he turns to the condition of the faithful soul, he cannot be thinking merely of their temporary deliverance from sickness or from the danger of death. His mind in both cases is dwelling on the final end, and he is assured that God will deliver his soul from the power of Sheol, because He will receive him. The relation between the faithful and God is one which death cannot destroy. Whether, however, he is assured of resurrection or of such deliverance from death as was given to Elijah is not so clear, and is indeed a purely academic question. For what is most important in his utterance is that he has become conscious of a life with God which cannot come to an end through the accident of death. How it is to be made triumphant he leaves and is content to leave with God. He in whom he trusts is able to meet every difficulty and to overcome.[1]

It will be noted that, because the prophets believed in a kingdom which God should set

[1] Nothing has been said about the question as it presents itself in Job. Personally I think that such a passage as xix, 26 can only be fairly interpreted as implying not only immortality, but resurrection. Yet the relative texts in the book are so justly debatable that they can only be used after a discussion which would have been too technical and long for a paper of this nature.

up on the earth, their thought of immortality involved resurrection by which the faithful returned to share in the life God made possible for His own. The psalmists, however, urging that the relation between God and the saint was too enduring to be brought to an end by death, could believe in immortality which ignored resurrection. But, because both prophets and psalmists come to the question as a religious question, concerned with God and the faithful soul, in neither is there any teaching of reward or punishment in Sheol. Indeed, Sheol remains what it has always been; only it has no power over those who have committed themselves to God. As for those who have had no real relation to God in this life, they need not cease to be, but they pass at death into the dim waste land into which shall drift down all the wreckage from time's sea.

Nowhere, indeed, in the Old Testament is there any teaching of hell as a place of punishment, for Sheol retains to the end its original non-ethical character. Even Dan. xii, 2, 3, which speaks definitely of resurrection and which, in particular, expects the resurrection of a select number of the wicked in order that they may receive punishment, says nothing whatever about their final punishment. Whether they are to be brought up from Sheol that they may

receive a dramatic penalty for their deeds and then relegated to Sheol itself as their final abode, or what becomes of them after this punishment is not even hinted at. Nor is there anything in the book which can help to clearer understanding of the author's meaning. Whether he expects all sinners to be restored to life, or merely looks that those who have been specially heinous transgressors shall be selected to receive special treatment, is left entirely uncertain. The vague nature of the *obiter dictum* makes it clear that men were thinking gravely over the question but leaves it an open matter as to the conclusions at which they had arrived. All that is said is perfectly consistent with the view that the writer held the usual view of Sheol as a place of life at its lowest quality into which departed all sinners of mankind. Like all Old Testament teaching on the subject, the book seems to confine itself to the instant conviction that God, because He is God and because the souls of the righteous are His, will not leave them where they can no longer be in the conscious sense of His care.

It will, accordingly, be noted, and cannot be too emphatically insisted on, that at the close of the Old Testament canon immortality was not a doctrine definitely held and taught by Judaism, as e.g. the unity of God was held and taught. It

was rather the necessary consequence of the convictions on the nature of God which the Jew believed; as such, its force was only felt by men who profoundly shared these convictions. Hence the faith in immortality only made its way among the men who were religiously alive. The Sadducees, who properly speaking never were a religious party, but who merely represented the somewhat worldly, slightly indifferent section which appears on the fringe of every religious community, were not interested in the question at all. For their part, they held by no such new-fangled doctrines; the old unethical idea of Sheol satisfied men who were not greatly troubled about ethics. But, further, the conviction brought great difficulty to that other section of opinion, which is also found in every communion, the body of sincere men who love established opinions, who like to see the articles of their faith in "black and white" and who look with some suspicion on everyone who insists that a living faith must have the courage to transform its temporary expression in obedience to the guidance of its inward principles. However much these men may have felt the attraction of the thought of immortality, and however much they might recognise that it was the inevitable outcome of convictions which they shared, they could not find it within the boards

of the now forming canon. It was not definitely taught within the four corners of the Law. And it is interesting to notice that those who accepted it, yet who felt the difficulty thus presented, adopted the familiar methods which appear in such circumstances. By strained interpretation of Scripture texts they tried to extract the doctrine of resurrection from passages into which they had first conveyed it.[1]

This shows of course that the doctrine was felt to be a novelty, was regarded in many quarters with suspicion and needed proof of its connection with the inherited Jewish faith. But there is not wanting evidence that it was not only accepted at once by certain circles of opinion, but was early made the basis of practices which had no meaning except in its light, for mention is made of a sacrificial sin-offering on behalf of the dead.[2] Where, however, it found most ready acceptance was among the apocalyptists and the wide body which they influenced. For these men's piety was less legal

[1] The most charming and touching illustration of this procedure is found in the Book of Adam and Eve. There we have the patent desire to insert the doctrine of resurrection into the original narrative of the fall. The writer stresses that man, being in the image of God, cannot be doomed to final death, and offers an ingenious exegesis of Gen. iii, 19. *Cf.* his chap. xxvii and xxviii, and *cf.* the similar method of proof in St. Luke xx, 37 *ff.*

[2] 2 Maccab. xii, 43.

and less traditional, and, since they had inherited the hopes of the prophets, they naturally continued a teaching which had an integral relation with the prophetic thought. All the apocalyptists deal with immortality in one form or another. Because, however, it was not yet framed into a coherent dogma, it could be and was presented in the most diverse shapes, and its implications are followed out and efforts made to determine their scope. Thus, when immortality was conceived as resurrection and this remained closely allied with a Messianic kingdom which was to appear on earth, the question naturally arose as to what was the condition of faithful souls during the intermediate period before that kingdom was set up. An intermediate state before the final judgment is frequently taught, which may be a condition of purifying pain,[1] or about which it is merely said that prayers and sacrifice avail for those who are consigned to it,[2] or which is represented as a state of reward and punishment preliminary to the final decision.[3]

Again, the prophets had taught the resurrection of the faithful dead and of these alone to share in the kingdom. Hence it is sometimes

[1] In the Book of Adam and Eve.
[2] In 2 Maccab.
[3] In the Apocalypse of Baruch and 4 Ezra.

taught that only Israelites shall rise from the dead,[1] or even only the righteous in Israel,[2] and again held that all without exception shall rise again.[3] But while some of these writers remain content with the earthly kingdom and believe that it shall continue for ever,[4] all do not retain this conception. The thought of the psalmists did not necessarily involve a Messianic or an earthly kingdom at all, and this side of Jewish piety was strengthened by the nation's intercourse with Greek teaching and thought on the subject. Some of the books retain the essentially Hebrew Messianic kingdom, but regard it as merely temporary,[5] while a number omit this feature altogether. The same uncertainty appears as to bodily resurrection, and for the same reason. Bodily resurrection was integrally related to a kingdom on earth, and so was frequently retained;[6] but, where the earthly kingdom disappeared, this often gave place to immortality. The Apocalypse of Baruch even teaches a resurrection into earthly

[1] Assumption of Moses and part of Enoch.

[2] 2 Maccab. and Sections 4 and 5 of Enoch.

[3] Testaments of Twelve Patriarchs, Book of Adam and Eve, Apocalypse of Baruch.

[4] Testaments of Twelve Patriarchs, 2 Maccab.

[5] Book of Jubilees, Apocalypse of Baruch, 4 Ezra.

[6] Most of Enoch, 2 Maccab., Adam and Eve, Apocalypse of Baruch.

bodies, which are to be changed into heavenly bodies.

Perhaps the profoundest change which was brought about in the post-Biblical period was that Sheol was transformed into a place of punishment. Here again, however, the teaching varies. The penalty in Sheol is almost always penalty, but sometimes it is conceived as eternal,[1] sometimes it is capable of being interpreted as resulting in destruction,[2] which is left indeterminate.

When one sets these variant opinions down, as I have attempted above, the result may seem to some minds to be nothing except confused guesses and hopeless uncertainty. But, if they be grouped and thought over in connection with the presuppositions as to Sheol, as to the Messianic earthly kingdom, and as to the survival of death which the men brought from their Old Testament, it will be seen that there is here the eager effort of men who believed in a living God and a living religion to explore with reverence the implications of their historical and ancestral faith on the subject. Post-canonical Judaism was not an 'ism at all. It was not a series of dogmas, firmly held and clearly defined.

[1] Apocalypse of Baruch, 4 Maccab., Secrets of Enoch.

[2] Psalms of Solomon, perhaps Enoch, Wisdom of Solomon, 4 Ezra.

Within certain clearly defined limits the men who composed it were singularly free in their thought and used their freedom; and especially they used it on the great but uncertain subject of the destiny of the individual soul.

The Christian Idea of Immortality

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In the limited space at my disposal some things which ought to be said, and without which any statement of the Christian idea of immortality is necessarily incomplete, have to be omitted; while, on the other hand, statements require to be made which call for evidence or argument which cannot here be supplied. Under the conditions of this volume that is inevitable. Further, the purpose of this essay is not to give an historical statement, or a Biblico-exegetical study, but to make a positive statement of Christian thought on the future life, as that thought has grown out of the undeveloped and sometimes confusing teaching of the New Testament.[1]

The Christian doctrine on immortality has its

[1] The writer may be permitted to refer for fuller statement and discussion to his volume, *The Other Side of Death.*

basis in the New Testament, which we accept as the general form for Christian thought. That Christian doctrine did not originate *in vacuo*. It has its roots in preceding Hebrew thought on the after-life, but as a trickling stream half hidden in the undergrowth of pagan Semitism, coming out into the sunlight in a few Psalms and in the Book of Job, passing into the dense marshland of the apocalyptic period, and emerging into New Testament times a somewhat turgid stream with luxuriant if not healthy growth along its banks. Now we must bear in mind that the waters of a river carry down with them something of the back-country through which they flowed, and in human thought it is psychologically impossible, even if it were desirable, to make a clean break with the ideas and forms of expression of a preceding age. This fact is persistently forgotten in the formulation of Christian doctrine, and nowhere has it produced more disastrous results than in the doctrine of the Last Things. Traditional orthodoxy on this subject has in it some things which we cannot believe, some which we feel we ought not to believe, and even some which call for emphatic denial. These are mainly survivals of crude Jewish thought dyed in Babylonish-Persian colours, or, in later ages, the precipitate of Roman law and mediæval jurisprudence.

The apocalyptic literature of the two centuries B.C. concerned itself largely with what we may call the topography and climate of heaven and hell, and the Christian doctrine of the first century could not avoid using familiar forms of expression or carrying over some ideas. We can see illustrations of this in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, where heaven and hell are within hail of one another, divisions of the Hebrew Sheol, or when the crass materialism of primitive eschatology accepted the penalty of sin to be fire and brimstone, burning bodies which had physical powers of suffering with asbestos quality of endurance, or when Paul speaks of the "third" heaven, or refers to "the man of sin." The unfortunate thing is that literalism applied to the Bible under a mistaken theory of inspiration has incorporated these flights of Jewish imagination into Christian teaching, and imposed them upon the Church as tests of orthodoxy; but oriental imagery and the materialisation of the spiritual should no longer be permitted to occupy the large place they do in our conception of the future life. At the same time one cannot but feel, when passing from Jewish apocalyptism to the New Testament how much has been left behind. It is like passing from the humid enervating atmosphere of a hot-house to the fresh sun-laden air of the open heath.

Another fact has also to be realised. In the New Testament we are dealing with undeveloped teaching as to the Last Things. What Professor A. B. Bruce has said of St. Paul is true generally of the New Testament. "On no subject was St. Paul, in his way of thinking, more a man of his time than on that of eschatology. And on no subject is it more difficult for one influenced by the modern spirit to sympathise with, or even to understand, the Apostle." [1] Lucidity of thought and definiteness of statement come from conflict either within the individual personality or in the community. Certain matters, such as the significance of a crucified Messiah, or the relation of the Christian salvation to the Mosaic ritual law, were what we term "burning questions." It was not so with eschatology as a whole. Minor questions as to what would happen to Christians who died prior to the Parousia might arise, but Jewish eschatology served most of the religious needs of the Apostolic age. In the organic world evolutionary development is dependent on environmental stimulus. The same is true in the world of thought, and such stimulus was, on the whole, lacking as to the subject of immortality. There is abundance of reference to the End, but everything is overshadowed by the expectation of the near advent of the Lord

[1] *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p. 379.

Jesus. Immature as the doctrine is in the New Testament regarding the content of the future life it is quite definite and clear as to the fact of personal immortality. Scripture recognises that man is a spiritual being, and belongs to the moral order of the universe.

The purely naturalistic view of man regards him as a merely superior animal, which projects its own fantastic wishes on to the unknown, and then draws them back as objective realities distinct from itself, their true creator. The Christian view, on the other hand, with its belief in a supreme personal Being who has revealed Himself in the beauty and order of the world, in saints and prophets, and finally in His Son Jesus Christ, bases all its hopes and thoughts upon that supernatural fact. Its doctrine of man as a self-conscious moral being makes him kin with God. Man is part of the physical world, in which he works out the purpose of God as a free agent though within the limits of a finite being. But he belongs essentially to the spiritual, and the spirit of man and the Spirit of God have relations of dependency and of obligation. It is in this relationship to God who is Life that the Christian doctrine of immortality has its source and inspiration.

To the Christian immortality is not simply continuance of existence. That aspect of it,

which may be called the metaphysical, has no interest for the Biblical writers. They have no philosophy of immortality and no metaphysic of the soul. It is existence with God, fellowship with Him, which creates the whole interest in a future life, "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is." That is, the specifically religious desire begins not with immortality but with God, and where it begins it ends. It had God first in its thoughts, and from this passed to a belief in immortality, but immortality of a special kind, "at home with the Lord," a fellowship which implied a certain likeness of character. Immortality, and the point is worthy of note, is thus directly connected with redemption. Christianity, as the heir of Hebrew religion, has that profound sense of sin which recognises that it means separation from God, "be ye holy for I am holy." Its ideal is "perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." It has not attempted to solve the problem of sin and evil speculatively, but from the religious point of view it has intensified its actuality. From the same point of view it seeks to overcome sin, and so "abolish death," to do away with sin through a restoration of that fellowship with God, the loss of which is the last penalty of sin. No speculative discussion or argument can affect this experience of the soul, or explain away the profound reality

of sin which can have this effect. Ἁμαρτάνω may be used by pagan Greek and by Christian, but they do not thereby mean the same thing. It is "missing the mark," but not the same mark. To the Greek (though hardly to Plato or the Stoics) evil is more metaphysical than ethical, attaching itself to mere finiteness, or to some limiting principle called "matter." To the Christian sin is not so much a breach of law as a violation of love, and consequently a loss of fellowship. The filial relation of God is everything to Christianity. Out of it grows all knowledge of God, and in fulfilment of it is all morality and life. *To have this fellowship restored is immortality.* It was not a restoration to the capacity for good, a faculty which man never lost, else were his case hopeless. Nor was it the mere dominance of the moral law, for "love is the fulfilment of law." It was restoration to fellowship with God in and through Jesus Christ, a personal relationship which carried in it all else, morality and immortality, "ye will not come to me that ye may have life." This new relationship, however, could not come by a gradual reformation of character, self-induced. It requires the imparting of a new principle of action, or rather the possession of a new life-giving power, a kind of new birth which would realise itself in conformity with its source in

God, in short a Christ-likeness. A life thus redeemed has already in it the assurance of immortality, "he that believeth on the Son hath eternal life," and is passing on to fulness of life, to "more abundance." Immortality therefore in the Christian sense, is not due to any metaphysical quality of the soul, though this may be a basis for it, but to a personal holy relation to God, "because I live ye shall live also." It is the concomitant of redemption. The philosophical and ethical grounds for immortality are confirmatory of the Christian belief, but that belief itself rests on faith in God and the inward assurance of the spirit that the restoration of fellowship with God, through our divine Redeemer, guarantees immortality. It is the faith of the Psalmist enriched and assured. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine holy one to see corruption."

This faith is not based upon any divine decree or arbitrary selection. Though not necessarily perceptible to all who hold it, it has its foundation in a profound sense of the permanency of moral values, and the immortality of love. To be in faith-union with God is to be like God, not in the attributes of omnipotence or omniscience but in His holy character. There is in the New Testament constant insistence upon the need for purity of heart and moral beauty of

life, with stern warning of the reality of judgment, "we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad," "each man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; for the fire itself shall prove each man's work, of what sort it is."

The Christian doctrine clearly rests upon a conception of *values:* and very specially in the mind and teaching of Jesus, though evident also in the Apostolic Epistles, is the conviction that the only thing of absolute value is character, seen in God and manifested in those whose life is united with Him in faith. To believe is to be good, "faith without works is dead," "verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also." This supreme sense of the moral values of life, involved in faith in God, made Jesus independent of the material things of this life, not in the way of despising them, as in later asceticism, but in a comparative view of values. It is the basis of that serenity of spirit which no outward circumstances could disturb. But, further, we must note that values exist only in relation to the life of the self, and therefore the preservation of these values involves the maintenance, in

short the immortality, of the self. As such the soul of man has a worth which sets it above all finite existences. Because it was capable of this it was worth saving, even at the cost to the Son of God of the agony of Gethsemane and the cross of Cavalry. God would not let that perish which was of such intrinsic value in itself and to Him, and which has in it still higher possibilities of attainment, "for it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if He shall be manifested we shall be like Him." We are saved not only for what we are, but for what we may become.

> Verdict which accumulates
> From lengthening scrolls of human fates,
> Saying, What is excellent,
> As God lives, is permanent.
>
> *R. W. Emerson.*

This is even more evident when we grasp the idea of God as love, the all-embracive attribute of the Christian God. Love can never be indifferent to the fate of the loved, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life"; love cannot be other than redemptive in a sinful world. But love is never *singular*, it implies a social universe of personalities, "we love because He first loved

us." It is a divine lesson by God who is love, carrying with it a new commandment, "Even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Now, such a relationship, once established, must, if true to itself, go on, and *go on as individual relationship.* The idea of countless generations as mere stepping-stones to the attainment of an ultimate few, the last stage of an evolutionary process, may be true in the other and lower stages of organic life, but cannot be so for man as spirit, self-conscious and morally capable. That quality lifts him, not merely in type but as an individual, to a higher life where values cannot remain except as inhering in the individual personality, though never wholly for himself. Nor can they be merely an enrichment of the Absolute, the All, for that would mean that God used man, all his suffering and all his discipline, as a means for His own enrichment. A selfish God and a God of love are a contradiction. The human individual is an end in himself, and it would be a denial of love to make him merely a means to an end in which he had no share. We can see, therefore, that the revelation in Jesus Christ of what man is, and may become, and of what God is, involves nothing less than individual immortality, not because of the degree of present human attainment, but because we have in some measure, possibly only in small

measure, established a relationship which has joined us to a higher order of being, and which has in it "the power of an endless life."

From what has been said above it will be evident that Christianity can never accept any idea of immortality which makes it less than individual. The raindrop merged in the ocean, the eddy formed in the current and then disappearing, has nothing in common with the Christian hope. Dim as the idea of immortality may be in the Old Testament the religious conception rises above any thought of man as a mere organism, the dissolution of which carried with it the extinction of personality. It is true that Hebrew religion, turning away from a pagan Semitic eschatology, groped in the darkness, feeling after a kind of corporate immortality, so that the Israelite lived on in his children and his children's children; but strange as it may seem to us with our exaggerated individualism, he did feel that he lived on. But the surge of his faith in God led him later to a recognition of individuality, and eventually to the idea of individual immortality. Yet we should never forget that if we are redeemed, it is as citizens of a Kingdom, members of a family, the sheep of a flock. The Christian scheme of life though individually conceived is socially conditioned.

The basic principle on which the Christian idea

of immortality is founded prepares us for the New Testament conception of it as throughout morally conditioned. Later Christian thought and authoritative credal statements have so far departed from the New Testament idea as to make the soul inherently immortal, constituted of such metaphysical simplicity that it does not admit of dissolution. If early Hebrew eschatology was all but submerged in pagan Semitism, and early Christian eschatology deeply dyed in Jewish apocalyptism, later ecclesiastical eschatology in common with theology as a whole floated in a sea of platonic philosophy, which maintained the independent immortality of the soul. This is a view destitute of any foundation in the Bible and derived from Greek philosophy. An immortality morally conditioned does not admit of an immortality independently based upon some metaphysical quality of substance. We can accept the teaching of modern science that man has evolved from lower forms of animal life, not only physically but psychically, but the main point is not where he has come from, or how he has come, but what he has become. He is the fruitage of a long process of evolution, who by virtue of his moral personality has passed out of the mere category of animal and become a member of that moral order which is the expression of the divine nature. But the process of human evolu-

tion is not yet complete. Scientists [1] are pointing out to us that the further development of man is not on the physical but on the psychic plane, his advance is become more spiritual, "to be spiritually minded is life and peace." This is not inevitable in every individual, no evolutionary process ever is, it is not compulsory, but with his own consent. It is his voluntary response to the stimulus of a spiritual environment, towards a higher life, "God which worketh in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure." This is the purpose of God for man, to this end God in Christ Jesus intervened in human history. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Man was in the gravest danger, through the wrong exercise of his own free will, of "missing the mark." God's purpose for him was otherwise, and the loving grace of God was and is revealed in Him who came "to reveal the Father" and who is Himself "the way and the truth and the life."

We are warned by Jesus Himself that immortality is through our own response to the call of God, "ye will not come unto me that ye may have life," "whosoever believeth on me shall never die." They who are "accounted worthy to attain" to that resurrection which is

[1] E.g., J. Arthur Thomson and J. Young Simpson in recent books.

life are not arbitrarily chosen by some irrational divine decree. They are those who abide in Him as the branch abideth in the vine. Any individual not in this living union with God in Christ "is cast forth as a branch and is withered." And Paul is in accord with his Master, "For ye died and your life is hid with Christ in God," but like every advance, from the protozoa to man, it has to be striven for, and "strait is the gate and narrow is the way."

Traditional theology, with a strange disregard of the insistent teaching of the Bible, has taken the other view, that man is by his very nature immortal and must endure for ever in a state of bliss or a state of woe, and this view it has sought to impose upon the Bible and has inflicted upon the Church. In this matter we hold that the scientists have proven the better theologians. As one of them has recently said,[1] "man is immortable rather than immortal, and can only realise his true destiny as he fulfils his place in the moral order." This is not to say that man is at present the natural heir of death. That was the error of the "Conditionalism" associated with the name of Edward White. The biblical view, as we see it, especially in the mind of Jesus, is that man by his very nature is still capable of good, is in some measure good, and

[1] Prof. J. Young Simpson.

belongs to the order of the immortals, but that unless he makes his calling and election sure he will miss that for which God intended him, and which therefore is his true destiny. It is what the present writer has called elsewhere, "potential immortality," a term which might well be substituted for the older and more barren phrase, "conditional immortality." Because immortality is something to be attained, because it has in it this high moral worth, and because it is fellowship with God, it is always spoken of in the Bible in glowing terms of desire. It is a great and high destiny to which through Christ Jesus the poorest outcast may attain. It is a "gain" which is "far better" than anything this earthly life can offer. In the words of Professor H. R. MacKintosh,[1] "Immortality, in the characteristically Christian meaning of the word, may be truly described as conditional. No one can have it who is not united to Jesus by faith." If there be any other kind of immortality the New Testament knows nothing of it. It would be "an empty abstract immortality" which is a contradiction in terms, and has no interest for Christian thought.

This "characteristically Christian" view of immortality raises another question which it is best to face quite frankly. It is a cardinal

[1] *Immortality and the Future*, p. 219.

principle of Christian doctrine that Jesus Christ is the supreme revelation of God the Father, as Jesus Himself has told us, "Neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." The ultimate fate of every man is determined by the relation to God which is expressed in Jesus Christ. Traditional orthodoxy asserts this principle as a general statement, but seeks to save its eschatology from manifest injustice by professing that the vast majority of the human race will be judged by another standard, namely, conformity to "the law of nature," the dim light of the moral law which still abides in every man's conscience. It will in most cases require to be a very lax judgment to attain its object, but even this is a late modification of the old orthodoxy which consigned all such to eternal hell. But this modified orthodoxy is in danger of belittling the place of Jesus Christ in the divine economy of redemption, and making void the word of Scripture, "Neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." The attempt to claim Paul's support for their view is imposing upon that Apostle an idea which his whole teaching contradicts. We must take account not only of the heathen who have never heard the name of Jesus but also of those within

Christendom who have only had presented to them a distorted image of God and a defective Gospel, as well as of those who have not, prior to death, established any decisive relation for or against God, yet who have in them much that is good. Naturally and properly the urgency of the New Testament, as it must be of every preacher, is the tremendous issues of the present opportunity and the importance for the life to come of the life that now is. We are even now making character, the value or poverty of which we carry into the after-life, and it is a crisis when Jesus Christ stands knocking at the door of our heart. But we cannot ignore that fact that there are millions in every generation who have not seen the beauty of Christ, and who cannot be said to have definitely rejected the grace of God. What of such? If we limit ourselves to specific declarations of Holy Scripture, we have practically no solution of a problem which in the expectation of the near Advent of the Lord and for other reasons did not interest the Apostolic writers. But if we take to heart the creative ideals of the New Testament, and treat these as guideposts of the Spirit to a pathway along which the Apostles travelled only a little way, we are warranted in believing that the work of divine grace does not suddenly cease because of a microbe in the blood which destroys this mortal

frame, or a murderous bullet in the brain. On the view maintained by traditional orthodoxy the millions of immature characters with no decisive relation to Jesus Christ pass straightway to eternal torment. The tares and the wheat are burned together before the harvest of these lives is complete. No doctrine has any right to a place in the Christian scheme of thought which represents God other than we know Him in Jesus Christ. And what God is as revealed in Jesus He always is. His character is one, "with whom can be no variation neither shadow that is cast by turning." The dissolution of the physical body cannot but mean great changes to us, but it has not the same importance for God, it does not change His character or imply that His redemptive love manifested in Christ Jesus is of a timal or spatial character and suddenly ceases to function when our hearts cease to beat. He is still and forever the God and Father of Jesus Christ. Nor on the other hand have we any reason to assume that the spirit of man, possessing all the functions of personality, including that of moral distinctions, is incapable of repentance once it has parted from this mortal clay. What is there in the merely physical which subtracts from personality this capability and leaves all the rest?

Whether eventually there will be any finally

impenitent is a question on which no man can dogmatise. The purpose of God is that all should turn unto Him and live, "Who willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." There are aspects of New Testament thought, especially Pauline, which favour universal salvation, yet it must be said that the general outlook of the New Testament assumes that some will so persistently abide in evil, making evil their good, that they have destroyed in themselves the last hope of repentance. Whether Christian faith will eventually accept that possibility or treat the New Testament assumption as a remnant of earlier and cruder eschatology is a question still undecided. One cannot be blind to the fact that in the Epistles of the New Testament, especially the Pauline, the view of the world and of man is radically pessimistic. That however is not the impression one gathers from the attitude of Jesus. He who knew as no other what was in man, and perhaps for that reason had an inextinguishable hope for men and women, and a wonderfully keen sense and appreciation of the good that was in them. Hope for all will still remain with us, but the reality of free-will, and the analogy of the evolutionary process forbid our assent to dogmatic universalism. The divine omnipotence in relation to personality

is not that of force but of love, and to say that love *must* conquer in the end is to introduce into it an element which is not love. If human free-will be a reality, it involves a self-limitation of God which could only compel salvation by unmaking man in order to save him.

> Though God be good and free be heaven,
> Not love divine can love compel;
> And though the songs of sin forgiven
> Might sound through lowest hell,
> The sweet persuasion of his voice
> Respects the sanctity of will.
> He giveth day; thou hast thy choice
> To walk in darkness still.
>
> *Whittier.*

If, however, there be any finally impenitent, any who so love evil that they persistently refuse the good until there be no good left in them, Christian thought refuses to accept the grim doctrine of an eternal hell. It is supposed to be taught in the New Testament, else it had long since vanished from the Christian creed. We hold that this supposition is not warranted, and that the real force of ἀιώνιος (eternal) is intensive rather than durative, and St. Paul's word ἀπώλεια (destruction) favours the idea of elimination, as personal beings, of those who are irretrievably impenitent.[1] It is not consonant with the revelation of God in Jesus Christ to

[1] A full exegetical discussion will be found in the writer's book, *The Other Side of Death.*

think that when all hope of amendment is gone He will maintain personalities in existence for the sole purpose of punishment. Further, a philosophy of the universe which believes in an ultimate unity cannot rest satisfied with a permanent dualism.

The entrance upon the heavenly state, in so far as it is not a transformation at the Parousia, is described in the New Testament as Resurrection. Hebrew religion had reached a faith in immortality before it acquired a doctrine of resurrection, and when it did it was profoundly influenced by the crude ideas of Babylonian Zoroastrianism and its own materialistic conception of the Messianic Kingdom. Resurrection was the restoration of the body for the purpose of sharing in the glory of the Messiah's reign on earth. In these beliefs the New Testament writers were brought up, and none of them has quite freed himself from this materialism, unless it be St. John, if we treat John v, 28–29 as by another hand. Ecclesiastical creeds, and in fact the whole Church has followed the Apostolic writers in this adherence to Judaism. Yet the specifically Christian thought, particularly in St. Paul and St. John, has no need for a bodily resurrection.[1] The faith-union with Christ is

[1] The bodily resurrection of Jesus is not in question. There were special conditions in His case which are not present in that of His followers.

itself a sharing in eternal life which knows no break, and when, in the dissolution of the body, that life passes at once to the more spiritual atmosphere of the Heavenly Kingdom it must have some means of self-expression. Paul felt strongly that if we must wait for that experience till some general resurrection the victory of Christ would not be complete and death would not be wholly gain. On the other hand he could by no means accept the Greek idea of a bodiless or "naked" spirit, a wandering and ineffective shade. Accordingly, he boldly conceived the idea of a "spiritual body" which would be ours immediately we had passed from the body that is mortal. It was a great idea, born of a great faith, and fulfilling the scientific principle that life will always form for itself an organism suited to its environment. We, no more than Paul, know what the "spiritual body" connotes, but our faith answers to his that the new life in Christ knows no break, that to it "God giveth a body as it hath pleased Him," and we need no other. Our earthly body has served its purpose and returns to the earth whence it came.

The Christian doctrine of immortality is based upon a conception of God as holy love seeking to raise man to a higher stage of moral and spiritual life, and into a closer fellowship with Himself. This implies also a high sense of

human value, for such a destiny can only be predicated of Beings who essentially belong to the order of immortals. The worth of man is revealed in God's effort to save him and the high destiny to which he calls Him.

The Philosophy of Immortality

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It may be well to explain at the outset what is here meant by a Philosophy of Immortality. The title is not to be supposed to imply that speculative thought can offer a rational demonstration of the truth of immortality. The phrase ought rather to be taken to mean the contribution philosophy is able to make to the subject, whether in the way of defence or of suggestion and criticism. The judgment of philosophy on this, as on other things, is important, for its outlook is not departmental but synoptic. In other words, it deals with the experienced world as a whole, and is thus better fitted to determine how far a specific claim to be real or true coheres with and is justified by the body of experience.

The idea of immortality, it need hardly be said, was not created by philosophical thought; it was presented to philosophy by religion. Very

early in human culture there emerged beliefs in the soul's survival after death, beliefs which persisted; and faith in immortality has become a central doctrine of some of the greatest religions. The belief that man's destiny lies beyond this present earthly environment has been deep-rooted and widespread, and this aspiration, some have thought, is a token that it will find a fulfilment. If man were a mere "thriving earth worm," why should he be moved by these far-reaching hopes? Yet it would not be wise to lay too much stress on this argument. The passion for immortality is not universal in races or in individuals, and there are those who welcome a lapse into the unconscious as the price of deliverance from the limits of finitude and the bondage of desire. An eminent thinker of our day says about the longing for a future life: "It is idle to repeat, 'I want something,' unless you can show that the nature of things demands it also." And because metaphysics deals with the nature of things, or reality, men look to it for some ruling on the subject. From the speculative point of view the question frames itself in this way: Is reality such that immortality is necessary? Does the nature of things call for the continued existence of persons after death? Or is reality of such a character that the persistence of any form of

personal life after the dissolution of the body is contradictory, and therefore impossible? Before considering how far philosophy can answer these questions we ought to be clear about two points: we must understand definitely what is meant by (*a*) the soul, and (*b*) immortality.

(*a*) In popular thought about the soul there still linger some of the associations of early culture. Originally connected with the breath as the principle of life, the soul for primitive folk was a kind of shadowy entity within the body, but capable of being detached from it and of returning to it again. Hence crude notions of the transmigration of souls were possible, the idea, for instance, that the soul of man after death might pass into an animal. The vestiges of this animism persisted long; and it was the merit of Socrates, if we accept Prof. Burnet's view, that he discarded this way of thinking and frankly identified the soul with the self. Obviously no survival of the soul which did not mean the survival of the self, could have any personal and ethical value. We do not, then, when we speak of the soul, mean an entity or substratum apart from the self, and to which the self is somehow attached. This crude way of thinking is really a survival of animism.

(*b*) The term "immortality" would, *prima facie*, seem to convey a meaning sufficiently

precise, for it indicates that the soul is not dissolved by death. Yet the notion of deathlessness or eternity may be variously conceived. It may denote the fulness of a life superior to change and decay and realised even now, a life in comparison with which death does not count. The words of Schleiermacher in the *Reden* suggest this kind of immortality: "In the midst of finitude to be one with the Infinite, and in every moment to be eternal, is the immortality of religion." Yet neither immortality in this sense, nor the eternity of an impersonal reason in which men share, is the religious doctrine of immortality. Nor is the spiritual idea of eternal life to be identified with mere indefinite duration in time. As Von Hügel remarks: "The soul *qua* religious has no interest in just simple unending existence, of no matter what kind or of a merely natural kind." The unending senility of Swift's Struldbrugs, or the monotonous endurance of Tennyson's Tithonus, would be an object of dread, not of desire. When we speak of personal immortality we emphasise the quality rather than the quantity of the life, and we mean that the personal values are conserved and maintained.

Further, I think most people will agree that persistence without any continuity of memory and interest would be futile; for a personality

which had no living links of connection with what had gone before would be, to all purposes, another personality. A contemporary philosopher, Dr. McTaggart, has tried to defend an immortality without memory, but his arguments are unconvincing. No one, remarked Aristotle, would wish to possess all good on condition of becoming another person,[1] and Leibniz asked, "What good would it do you to become king of China on condition that you forgot what you had been?" In fact, if immortality means personal immortality, then some community of memory and interest must survive the break caused by death. In other words, death must not mean a total rupture of continuity; it must somehow be bridged by memory as in the analogous case of dreamless sleep. However great the change implied by death, the self must preserve the consciousness of its identity throughout.

After these explanations let us now turn to consider briefly the treatment of the subject in certain systems of philosophy. In this way we shall come to understand better the difficulties raised by the problem, and perhaps we may be able to see better the most promising line by which a solution may be approached.

In ancient philosophy the most important con-

[1] *Eth. Nic.*, ix, 4, 1166*a*.

tribution to the subject was made by Plato. As we follow the different "proofs" he offers, we feel we are in contact with a mind already profoundly convinced of immortality as a fact. The universe revealed a moral order, and Plato believed that immortality was implied in the working of that order. The various arguments he develops in its favour represent endeavours to find a support for his independent conviction even though as arguments they frequently fail to impress us. There is sometimes difficulty in accepting the presupposition of some of his "proofs." When he tells us that the soul, being simple, cannot be dissolved into constituent elements, we ask how we can be assured of its simplicity. In the same dialogue, the *Phædo*, he applies his principle that things have certain predicates because they share in certain ideas to show that the soul, because it partakes of the idea of life, cannot be mortal. Yet this only shows that the soul, so long as it continues to be a soul, must be living. It does not prove that a soul cannot die. In the *Republic* he contends that a thing can only be destroyed by its opposite, as snow by heat; and he concludes that if vice, the disease of the soul, could destroy it, the soul would have already been destroyed. Some of the arguments set forth in the *Phædrus*, the *Timæus* and the *Laws* will appeal rather more

to the modern mind. The "proof" in the *Phædrus* turns on the principle that the soul is self-moved, and is also a source of movement in other beings.[1] Or, as we might put it, the soul reveals a principle of spontaneity and activity which lifts it above the sphere of mechanism, and seems to suggest its independence. In the *Timæus* Plato throws out another suggestion. Our souls, he tells us, at least in their higher part, are the work of the Creator, and He cannot will to destroy His own creation.[2] Here the stress of the argument falls on the character of God whose will is "a greater and mightier bond" than can be disrupted by the forces of dissolution; and the idea is one which has still a strong appeal. In the *Laws*, the work of his old age, Plato reiterates his former notion that the soul is self-moved; it is prior to the body and rules it, the "oldest of all things born," and it is immortal.[3] Taken singly, none of Plato's "proofs" can be called convincing, but taken together they yield an impressive testimony to the faith of one of the greatest of minds that the destiny of the human spirit lies in a transcendent world.

Aristotle did not follow the lead of his teacher

[1] *Phædrus*, 245 *c.* 246*a*, where the soul is described as Τό αὐτὸ κινοῦν, and Τοῖς ἄλλοις ὅσα κινεῖται πηγὴ καὶ ἀρχὴ κινήσεως.

[2] *Timæus*, 41 A.B.

[3] *Laws*, 892, 896, 907.

in this matter. The soul, as he conceives it, is the actualisation, the ideal fulfilment (ἐντελέχεια) of the body, and so, one would suppose, not independent of the body. And though the human spirit shares in the "creative reason" which is eternal, yet this incorporeal reason is devoid of the qualities of memory and intelligent thinking.

At the birth of modern philosophy men were feeling the need of some closer determination of the soul in its relation to the world, and the term *substance*, the Latinised form of the Greek οὐσία, was used to define it. Descartes distinguishes and contrasts the soul as unextended and thinking substance from extended and material substances in nature, and between the two kinds of substance there is nothing in common. Yet in both cases the term substance denoted something which exists in its own right, and functions as the support or substratum of qualities; and this conception when applied to the mind or soul tended to convey misleading associations. None the less the word had come to stay, and Locke, in the *Essay*, uses the same category of substance and attribute alike in regard to matter and to mind. In the early pages of the *Analogy* we find Butler adopting the idea that the soul is a simple, unitary and indiscerptible being in which consciousness inheres, and so arguing to

its independence and immortality. All this is quite in harmony with Locke's use of substance. This way of thinking persisted until the time of Kant; nor is it difficult to discern the motive which inspired it. People thought there must be some permanent basis or point to which the changing life of the soul could be attached, and by which it might be sustained. It was just against this conception of substance that Kant directed the fire of his criticism.

The burden of Kant's objection to the so-called Rational Psychology is that it speaks of the soul as a substance, one and simple, and in doing so misapplies the term. Substance is a category by which the mind synthesises the data of sense-perception, and as such it is not to be applied to the synthesising mind itself. If you suppose there is an inner perception of the mind as a unity or substance behind its changing states, you are mistaken, for by this inner perception you reach nothing permanent. No doubt, says Kant, the "I think" of apperception accompanies all our perceptions, but it is merely a logical subject, and it is illegitimate to turn this logical subject into a metaphysical reality and to describe it as a unitary thinking substance.

Kant's penetrating criticism finally exposed some of the fallacies of the old psychology, and

showed that arguments for immortality based on them were no longer valid. He made it plain that one could not uncritically use categories valid in the external world of the inner world or mind. At the same time his own conception of the self was highly ambiguous and unsatisfactory, and in effect reduced it to a nebulous logical abstraction. If the self is not in some sense real, how, we ask, can its experience be valid? and why should we be able to distinguish between the phenomenal and the real? In fact Kant had to rehabilitate the self when he came to deal with the practical reason or moral will.

I go on to examine two broad lines of approach by which modern metaphysical thinkers have sought to determine the nature and destiny of the soul. The one line is to decide its nature and claims in the light of the great whole of things within which it appears: the other line is to consider the character of individuality itself, and on this basis to infer the nature and prospects of the individual self.

The former method was followed by Spinoza. Like Descartes, Spinoza defined substance as that which exists and is conceived *per se*, and from this he inferred that there could be only one substance, the universe, *Deus sive natura*. This one substance, manifesting itself for us under the attributes of extension and thought,

embraces all things and minds as phases or modes of its own being. The conditions imposed by this substance preclude any independent reality on the part of individuals. The mind of man is just the idea of the human body, and has only a seeming reality as the idea of this particular body. Accordingly, though Spinoza speaks of the *pars æterna nostri* and says, *sentimus experimurque nos æternos esse*, he must mean that mind in man merely persists as an aspect of the infinite Mind; and this Mind is utterly different from the limited mind of man. For Spinoza the claims of the one Substance are paramount, and annihilate all finite claims.

In this matter something the same must be said of the system of Hegel. No doubt Hegel will have nothing to do with the notion that substance is the ultimate category; he remarks tersely that the Absolute is subject, not substance. The Absolute is the all-inclusive self-consciousness which expresses itself in and through finite minds. But as these minds are only differentiated from the Absolute Mind and from one another by their specific relation to particular human bodies, it would seem inevitable that, when the body is dissolved, the soul must be absorbed and merged in the Absolute. No doubt Hegel does not explicitly deny immortality, and he speaks of the eternity of the

spirit; but it is not easy to see that his conception of the universe gives any real ground for the expectation that the soul after death should survive as a separate centre of consciousness within the Absolute. The negative conclusion is more explicitly drawn by the late Dr. Bosanquet in his Gifford Lectures on *The Value and Destiny of the Individual.* For him the claims of the Absolute are supreme, and the contradictions which infect the notion of the finite mind make it impossible to treat it as independently real. In truth the self has no proper being for itself; it is not substantial but adjectival, a qualification of the Absolute, which is the perfect and all-inclusive Individual. "The self, beyond escape, is an element in the Absolute," and so "our best is really the being of the Absolute Reality." [1] Another believer in Absolutism, the late Professor Royce, made a brave attempt to find a place for immortality in his system. He lays great stress on the uniqueness of the individual as a whole of meaning, and suggests that these individual meanings are the essence of the mode in which the Absolute defines or specifies itself. It is true we can think of these meanings as involved in the self-representative system of the Infinite, but after all a living soul is more than a meaning. And if the Absolute is

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 258, 288.

a self and all-inclusive, as Royce supposes, it is impossible to see how a system of selves can fall within one Self and still retain their individuality.

I think our conclusion must be that Absolutism, if it is thorough and consistent, leaves no room for the immortality of the self. The reason is that the demands of the universal force upon it a conception of the self which does not favour such a conclusion. Of course, an Absolutist philosophy leaves various characteristics of the finite self unexplained. To me it does not seem evident why, in such a system, even the illusion of individuality should arise. Nor is it apparent why our sense of spontaneity, freedom, and responsibility should be so deep-rooted. These facts are hard to reconcile with the theory that individuals have no real being for themselves.

Let us now turn to the other line of approach, that which sets out from the character and claims of individuality. This was the path which Leibniz followed, and, as we shall see, it yields a more promising basis for the discussion of immortality. Leibniz used the term substance to define the soul, but for him substance in this connection was not a category of the external world: he meant by it an active spiritual being that unified its own states. It is important to

remember that the external associations of substance are not to be carried over into the conception of the soul. If the soul is regarded as a kind of substratum which supports the psychical life, difficulties at once arise. For how can thoughts inhere in a substratum which is other than the thoughts themselves? On the other hand, if individuality is not real, if the soul or self has not in some sense a being of its own, then there seems no good reason to expect its persistence.

Look at the matter in this way. Suppose we discard the notion of substance in any form, how, in that case, are we to regard the psychical life? If we say the self is merely the stream of consciousness, the fleeting succession of mental states, then the unity of the whole becomes unintelligible. An atomistic psychology, which seeks to build up the unity by the association of elements, really presupposes that which it strives to explain. For any act of connecting presupposes the unity of that which connects. It will be contended, no doubt, that the self is just the systematic unity of our ideas and desires, and if you say it is more than this you are hypostatising an abstraction. Now it is true that if we make the self the object of reflexion, and suppose it forms the ground of psychical process, a ground which is other than conscious-

ness and on which consciousness depends, then our position is open to criticism.[1] But we may refrain from asserting this, and at the same time insist that the unity and system of the inner life require explanation; and the explanation, we believe, is not to be found in the psychical elements themselves. Soul-life must be a unity from the first, and the process of development from the relatively simple to the complex and highly articulated is only possible within this unity. The self, we may be told, expands with its experiences, and is in some sense constituted by them. This is true of the self as object of thought, the self as ideal construction. But deeper than the self as object, and the condition of the development of the generalised idea of self, is the self as *ego*, immediately experienced and active in the process of synthesis and development. On this basal self depends the unity of psychical experience; and the activity of the ego is presupposed in memory and association, as well as in the correlation and fusion of the stimuli from the different sensory centres. It is futile to argue that these characteristics have gradually emerged in the course of psychical evolution; the truth is that there would have been no evolution if the self, in rudimentary

[1] This is what McDougall, in his *Body and Mind*, tends to do. *Vide* p. 283.

form, had not been present in the process from the first, and had not functioned throughout as a principle of synthesis. That the self requires some soul-substance to sustain it is of course an error, for the self itself is real and maintains itself in its changing states. In this connection Lotze has justly remarked: "We do not believe in the unity of the soul because it appears as a unity, but because it is able to appear or manifest itself in some way." [1] In other words, the unity is already presupposed in the facts, and is not evolved from them.

Some of the criticisms directed against the reality of the soul or active self are due to a failure to distinguish between the self as object of conceptual thinking and the fundamental self given in immediate experience.[2] In distinction from the pure ego, as Professor Ward says, the conceptual self is an "objective construction or intellective system." And it is true that for generalised thinking the individuality and uniqueness of the self are elusive, perhaps even contradictory. Yet these dialectical difficulties will not disconcert us, if we bear in mind that our intellectual constructions of the self are

[1] *Metaphysics*, Eng. Trans., II, 176.

[2] For a very important discussion of the nature and development of this distinction the reader is referred to Ward's *Psychological Principles*, pp. 361–82.

only possible because a real ego forms the basis for any intellectual construction whatever.

A final word may be added about the application of the term substance to the soul. The point is that, if we use the word, we use it with no implication of a substratum such as commonly clings to the external category. Writers like Paulsen and Wundt suppose that if we do employ the word we are illegitimately transferring a category associated with outer experience to the mind. But this seems to be a mistake, and the reverse is true. In other words, it is our direct experience of the enduring centre and the unifying principle of psychical process which we transfer to outer things, and so allow ourselves to speak of substance as the "support" of qualities.

So far we have tried to vindicate the reality and primacy of the self as the active and unifying principle of human experience. For it is plain that, if this cannot be done, any ground of belief in the survival of the self is *ipso facto* precluded. Still even those who accept the argument so far may feel that it does not carry with it any necessary implication of immortality. Granted, they will say, that the soul is not explained by the body, nevertheless souls are always found in conjunction with bodies, and it seems possible that there is such a correlation between body and

soul that the one cannot exist without the other. The two factors appear to be so intimately related that the elimination of the one may inevitably involve the extinction of the other. This, I think, would be true if the relation of mind to body were that which is described as epiphenomenalism or as parallelism. But if we take these theories as ultimate metaphysical truths, they break down before the activity and spontaneity of the self as a fact of experience. On the other hand, if we accept the interaction of soul and body, this might seem hostile to belief in the independence of the soul.

About the correlation of neural and psychic process, and about the influence of the one on the other, there seems no valid reason for doubt. If the visual centres in the occipital lobe of the brain are seriously damaged blindness ensues, and the action of alcohol or drugs on the cerebral centres is followed by a marked disturbance of the thinking powers. These and many other facts are too familiar to need emphasis; nor will it be disputed that there is a broad correspondence between the complexity of brain structure and mental faculty. But it is just as necessary to insist that the mind is capable of affecting bodily processes. Changes in the circulatory and the nervous system ensue from psychic influences, and the same is true of secretion and

digestion. Under hypnosis a person can be made insensible to pain, and we know that the will of a patient may greatly affect his chances of recovery from illness. When all is said, however, the phenomena of interaction do not yield any positive proof that the soul could not exist apart from the earthly body, and especially so when we bear in mind that the self which thinks can never be explained as a function of physiological processes. The truth rather is that the soul-life, in its progressive development, reveals an increasing independence of physical conditions. A powerful mind can often overcome the obstacles imposed by a feeble body. In the case of an individual who bends his will to the acquirement of certain aptitudes, it has been pointed out that "changes in different localities of the nervous mechanism, and in the association-tracts connecting these localities, gradually ensue as a consequence." And we may generalise and say that, far from function being absolutely determined by structure, it would be more correct to affirm that, as development proceeds, structure is more and more determined by function. To put the point more specifically, the thinking power of man was not determined once and for all by a given complex brain-structure; but just as man developed as a thinking animal, the complex cerebral system was gradually arti-

culated in response to the function. This lends support to our belief in the primacy and formative power of the psychical life in the process of human development. And the formative function of the soul at least suggests, though it does not prove, that its existence may not cease with the dissolution of the particular organism through which it acts.

The case for immortality would be established if it could be shown that the human self is intrinsically eternal. A well-known thinker, Dr. McTaggart, has argued that finite selves are differentiations of an impersonal Absolute, and so can neither come into being nor pass away. But he does not prove the Absolute must be differentiated thus, nor, if it were so, that these differentiations are necessarily identical with human selves. Moreover, the theory involves all the improbabilities of personal pre-existence. The truth seems to be that there is no way of demonstrating that a personal self which has come into being is somehow immortal in its own right.

But if metaphysics cannot yield positive proof of immortality, it may at least indicate possibilities or even suggest probabilities; and especially so in view of the reality of the self, its formative function, and its relative independence.

The definite question which arises at this point

is, whether we can give grounds for believing it to be possible or likely that, when the particular complex we call the body is dissolved, the soul continues and, it may be, enters on a new and higher form of experience. The philosophical theory which, I think, lends most support to this conclusion is monadism. On this view the body is a system of individual beings, which are psychical centres possessing varying degrees of psychical life, all of them being correlated to a supreme or "dominant monad" called the soul. The soul, so conceived, is not created by the interaction of the individual centres with which it is in sympathetic *rapport:* it has a being of its own, and may, as Leibniz suggested, have pre-existed, though not in a personal form. The quickening of a pre-existing monad into a soul or developed self could only be explained by the immanent activity of the Divine Spirit that sustains and is present to all centres of experience. On the other hand, one has still to ask whether the soul, after the break caused by death, could retain such a continuity with its own past and its former environment as would form a basis for memory. For survival without memory would, we have concluded, not be personal survival. It would be fatal to our hypothesis if it could be shown that memory entirely depends on brain structure and cerebral

traces. For even though the latter were ultimately interpreted by a theory of monads, yet at death the monads cease to form the specific interacting system through which the soul works.

Now, on any showing, the complex of elements which form the brain could not create memory apart from the persisting self which remembers. And psychological analysis shows that the operation of memory cannot be understood apart from the mediation of psychical "dispositions" which intervene between the cerebral structure and the soul, though they stand in closer relation to the latter than to the former.[1] The need for this supposition will be clear if you reflect that memory depends largely on meanings, and meanings are not cerebral processes. If the soul then after death carries with it those psychical dispositions, these may form a sufficient ground for such memory as is needed to link the new stage of soul-life with what has gone before, and so to enable the self to recognise itself as one in the different stages of its development. It will be pointed out that the soul and its dispositions have been developed in relation to a specific body and a determinate environ-

[1] On this point *vide* McDougall's *Body and Mind*, p. 342 *ff.*: It is important to realise that meaning cannot be expressed by brain structure. It involves psychical process, and memory implies meaning.

ment, and if both body and environment pass away it is difficult to see how the disembodied self could recognise itself as continuous with a previous state of existence. In reply we admit that death must mean a far-reaching change, but how great the change is we do not know. It is at least possible that the soul when liberated from the body may form for itself a new or transfigured body which has links of connection with the former organism and its corresponding environment. In that case the needful degree of continuity between the different stages of the soul's existence might be conserved. To some this line of thought may appear quite unconvincing, but at least we have no warrant for concluding that there can be no other embodiment of the spirit than the present. A recent thinker who would not have accepted the foregoing hypothesis was still constrained to admit that it is "impossible to deny that there may be future gradations of experience continuous with our finite selves." [1]

The course of this discussion confirms us in the belief that metaphysics gives no cogent proof of immortality, though it can show the weakness of arguments against it and indicate possibilities in its favour. But philosophy is wider than metaphysics in the strict sense; it takes cognisance of

[1] Bosanquet, *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 288.

all aspects of experience, and experience includes the realm of values. It is just the ethical and spiritual values of life which raise immortality from a merely possible truth to an object of reasonable faith. The ethical and spiritual grounds for immortality do not fall within the scope of this paper, but it seems well to indicate how the purely speculative treatment of the subject is supplemented from the standpoint of judgments-of-value.

Mere facts, if such there be, do not constitute what is most important in our many-coloured human life. What constantly interests us is the relation of facts to our feelings and purposes, and out of this relation man develops the values which are the object of his desire and hope, and therefore of his faith. And it is above all the ethical and spiritual values which are the highest as well as the deepest things in the life of mankind. Now valuation is rooted in the affective and volitional life, and is thus in its essence personal; to speak of purely impersonal values amounts to a contradiction in terms. Persons, in other words, are the active centres and sustainers of values, and, taken strictly, there can be no conservation of values in the universe apart from the conservation of persons. Above all it is the value of moral and spiritual personality which gives urgency to the demand that it should

be conserved. Hence the poet's protest against the thought that man

> "Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
> Who battled for the True, the Just,"

shall in the end

> "Be blown about the desert dust
> Or sealed within the iron hills."

If it be said that there is an immanent justice in the world which satisfies our sense of values, if it be argued that here and now we attain a completeness of life that renders any further stage of existence unnecessary, then in neither case, we reply, is there warrant for the assertion. That we find all the justice we need on earth when those who least deserve to suffer often suffer most, and the guilty frequently bring the worst consequences of their misdeeds on the innocent, cannot be maintained. Nor is it true that man attains completeness in this life. He is ever seeking, but is doomed never to find all he seeks; and the upward striving spirit is often cut off ere his powers can ripen to fruition. Man's reach seems greater than his grasp, and the demand for a complete good is expressed in the thought that immortality is a postulate of the moral and spiritual life. By a moral postu-

late we mean an idea which gives coherence to man's life and makes the universe in which he lives morally a more reasonable one. So understood a postulate is something more and deeper than a subjective desire.

Finally we ask: Is there any assurance that the world of facts must cohere with the claims of the ethical values, and that what ought to be really is? So far as the speculative theory of reality is concerned, we found it did not contradict a belief in the survival of the self, though it could offer no demonstration. Any further suggestions it could make were of the nature of hypotheses. There is nothing, therefore, in the structure of reality, so far as we know it, to neutralise what we may call the argument from value. Further assurance can only flow from our faith that the world of existences and the world of values form a teleological order in which the lower is a means to the higher. In the end our confidence that this is so rests on our faith that we live in a moral cosmos, the final ground of which is a supreme moral and spiritual Being. That the realms of nature and spirit are not alien to one another is clear enough, but our conviction that the universe will respond to and implement the full demands of the spiritual life can only rest on our faith in the character of God Himself. If we restrict ourselves to what

science and metaphysics can tell us, the problem of a life after death is likely to end in a note of uncertainty:

> "It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
> It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles."

A hope more sure and steadfast comes to us from our perception of the significance of spiritual personality, and from our faith in the goodness of God who will conserve what deserves to be conserved. For God, as Plato felt, cannot will to destroy His own highest handiwork.

The Ethical Basis of Immortality

Rudolf Eucken, D.D., Ph.D.

In modern times the problem of immortality has undergone many changes in the thoughts of men. In former ages immortality was regarded as absolutely certain; it brought a definite end to suffering and sure comfort in face of the dangers and distresses of life. Now, however, doubt has gained ground, and we dare not evade the task of substantiating what formerly was self-evident. In these circumstances it is particularly important to establish an ethical basis for immortality. This, however, cannot be successfully done without discussing the meaning of man's ethical struggle in general. We shall therefore follow this movement to that point where the ethical principle of immortality clearly emerges and gives a peculiar direction to our whole life. We shall see that the life of our soul contains different stages and that in these the relationships to time and eternity are differently regarded. We find man as a creature of nature

under the dominion of time; we find him as a spiritual being in conflict with time; we find him ultimately as a participant of immortality exalted above all time.

Let us follow more closely the steps by which the thought of immortality constantly leads us on.

I

Man as a creature of nature under the power of Time

The conception of nature has considerably changed. According to the view formerly held, the material world appeared as a closed and limited circle, as a cosmos formed like a work of art. Every single part was determined by its position in the whole. The movements in space had also a fixed order, and they seemed directed to a guiding goal. The modern view of nature has given to movement and with it to time more and more significance and has laid ever less stress upon the idea of the permanent. Of course, the modern view recognises unchangeable elements, but regards single units as in continuous change and looks upon movement in space and time as the ground phenomenon of the material world. The stage of organic life brings relationships which possess a certain measure of duration and bind the manifold into unity; but this duration is

limited, for all organic life is subject to death. Single lives must pass away and leave their places to others. All is a constant coming and going. The succession of generations effects a constant renewal of life and individuals appear in view of the life-process as negligible quantities, except as mere means for the purpose of upholding this process. We do not see that through the ebb and flow something essentially new is won and that the restless movement serves a higher end.

As a creature of nature man shares this apparently senseless life-process. He experiences the changing phases of youth, prime and old age. Only with him these distinctions are more sharply defined than in the case of animals. Sooner or later his life must end in death. Consequent on his intellectual endowment the thought of death constantly occupies his mind, alarms him, and drives him in some fashion to meet the annihilation that threatens. We know how this reaction has taken different forms and how in it faith and fantasy have both co-operated, without, however, on the plane of sense leading to a satisfying result.

The power of time extends over all the forms and kinds of the life of individuals. The older view, e.g. the Greek, regarded these forms as unchangeable, and looked upon this unchangeableness as evidence of an eternal order and a

complete superiority of the form over the material. Modern natural science has by palpable proofs shown the variability of forms. Geology and palæontology show incontrovertibly that whole species of life die out. At the same time the Evolution theory wins, far beyond the contestable assertions of Darwin, ever more ground, and the recognition of the emergence of new kinds of life pushes back more and more the boundary between the changeable and the permanent. We must indeed acknowledge the capacity of nature to create forms liable indeed to change but superior to mere mechanism. Nature seems to produce ever new formations.

As soon as we consider long periods of time we note that the human race in its material aspect shares this variability. It appears to have developed gradually and with difficulty from crude beginnings. Of course, that fact does not wipe out the distinction between men and animals, as materialism affirms, but it shows that man is also subject to the effects of time and is more strongly affected thereby than the older thinking assumed. The sway of becoming is also here not to be combated. For immortality on this ground, however, there is no room. We must pass over the boundaries of nature in order even to touch this problem. Life here is like an unlimited stream whose beginning and end we

are not able to see. Time encompasses us entirely as transient creatures of sense.

II

Man as a spiritual being in conflict with Time

We must first clearly differentiate the spiritual from the psychic in nature. The animals also share a psychic life in many manifestations, but theirs lacks self-sufficiency and brings no new aims. It is a piece of the nature process and all its striving only serves the material preservation of life and its reproduction. It is first of all in the human realm that there appears what we call the spiritual element, which transcends nature and opens up new paths and purposes. This life arises at first in tentative beginnings, but it grows incessantly, and manifests itself ever more distinctly as a new stage of reality. It opposes to nature a new order of life and thereby wins a cosmic meaning, which cannot possibly limit itself to our little earth. Here life does not exhaust itself in the relationship of its single parts to their environment, or to one another, but it forms an inner life, ultimately indeed an inner world with its own orders and values. The particular units are now held together by a unity. By his thinking man is able to break the bond of his material environment and by his own

activity to form an atmosphere, yes, to create a new realm. The whole course of human history shows a continual advance from the material to the immaterial world, a momentous insurgence of the material into the immaterial. More and more the struggle develops into ideal magnitudes and the upward movement becomes a conflict carried on by these. What formerly seemed the whole is now reduced to a mere environment. How the advance of life turns the material into means and tools for the use of the intellectual is plainly shown by the development of language. Its palpable tokens are more and more transformed into symbols of the mind. Similarly it happens in religion and in law. The world of knowledge differentiates itself ever more from that of naïve man, and leaves us in two life-worlds; one of material sensation and that of self-active thought. In all these provinces remarkable progress has been made, particularly in modern times. More than ever before man has found his chief impulse and power in ideas and principles. A thorough spiritualisation is undeniable. What, however, calls for special consideration is connected with that new condition of life which we call *Kultur*, or civilisation. Here man does not accept the state of life into which he is born as an imposed fate, but criticises it and seeks to his best ability to elevate it. More

and more life develops from the material world into that of thought, ever more intellectual contents are produced, and there arises a realm that is self-dependent, and life is changed into a self-development. This advance to a self-dependent life produces a peculiar relation of the temporal to the supra-temporal. The unfolding of that life is always dependent upon time; only with its help and through its experiences and services can the development reach its height and break the manifold obstacles. But such advance within time requires simultaneously an elevation above time. Man is by no means a mere piece of temporal becoming. He puts single units together; he surveys time, he examines and tests its character, he strives to win for it a permanent content, and thus dares to wage a fight against the mere flight of time. There arises a new relation of thinking man to things. On the plane of nature things are in contact only externally: an inner assimilation is not reached. Now, however, life on the spiritual level experiences a thorough-going clarification through an important differentiation. It is indeed a peculiarity of thought that it can distinguish the object from the subjective condition and keep both separate. The object, while distinct, remains in the presence of the soul, which cannot help occupying itself with the

object, and as it were draws the same back to itself. There thus arises a concurrent interaction of subject and object. Life is essentially enlarged and encloses itself in an independent circle. There grow up enduring spiritual creations which separating themselves from human conditions, demand rights of their own and exercise considerable power. Ultimately there arises a realm of independent truth. Therewith a bright light is shed upon life, and for its struggle a firm hold is secured. The apprehension of objective truth, however, raises man above the temporal. Although he cannot do without time in order to furnish his life with a content, the character of this content is not affected by the flight of time, and as it unfolds man may feel himself superior to time altogether. Then there rises up a strong desire that life and its work should endure. In virtue of our spiritual character we resist the limitation of our life to the short span which fate has assigned us. The individual, a transitory being who must soon depart from life's arena, is forcibly impelled to leave behind some kind of enduring trace of his existence, if only to live a little longer in the memory of his human environment. Hence celebrated kings have erected proud memorials of their deeds and inscribed their names on the inaccessible cliffs. Behind such action lies not

merely man's vain thirst for fame, but his endeavour not to let his whole being and influence sink into absolute nothingness. It is the appearance on life's horizon of the longing for immortality, for liberation from the thraldom of time, which threatens to swallow us up.

Civilisation demands inter-relations that transcend the individual units. By the tendrils of tradition the spiritual life rises to its heights. The present must take firm hold of the past in order to build itself up. Man would like to withdraw the main trunk of the tree of life from all change and so secure permanence to the results of his striving. This fact invests the idea of the classical with its great influence. Arrangements and customs of life proclaimed unchangeable and honoured as inviolable dominate men, particularly in the initial stages of civilisation. Religion likewise by its association of life with a sacred order works for permanence. All change is here forbidden as wanton wickedness.

Plato in particular has depicted in glowing colours the universal desire for immortality in the well-known passage about the banquet. He shows that nature, not yet at the human level, already manifests a vague instinctive desire for immortality in the propagative impulse, which implies the desire of creatures to live on in their offspring after their own dissolution. The striv-

ing of heroes for fame is an expression of the will to be immortal. The works of poets and statesmen also reach out to immortality. The same end is seen in the working out of the eternal in the reciprocity of revelation and participation, in the love of man to man, till in the perception and appropriation of eternal truth the crown of life is attained.

Civilisation thus affords man the possibility of a certain immortality, and the hope of it works as a powerful stimulus through the common life. Man can place his own individual qualities in the achievement and bring vistas of time and space that lie far beyond his own material existence under his influence. His individuality can, as an enduring stream of life, act like a present force upon the widest circles. If in particular he contributes spiritual qualities of a revolutionary and reviving kind, the power of time appears unable to get at him. World historical phenomena have likewise created their influence. Consider, for instance, the Greek age and its contribution to the formation and exaltation of life. With this line of thought, however, no matter how highly we esteem it, we cannot end. Supreme greatness of this kind is merely the lot of a few individuals and ages, and there still remains beyond all civilisation the great and heavy task that belongs to the realm of ethical

conviction and activity. This reveals new endeavours and also great perplexities. They manifest man's confidence in immortality, but they go beyond the unbounded length of time that marks the cultural life to the immortality of man's spiritual being and preserve for it a life that is everlasting.

III

Man as an ethical being and the possessor of real immortality

The main question in the ethical problem is whether man includes the whole compass of his life in a transcendent unity and reaches out from this unity to the right relationship with the world unity, the sovereign whole of reality. It is of course assumed that a spiritual power sustains and penetrates the world. The decisive concern here deals with the relation of one whole to another, and the inner bond that connects us with the All and God. To deal with this task properly we shall consider the kernel of life that lies behind all other activity. We credit action with full originality and grant freedom to the depths of the soul. We mean by the ethical not a limited stratum but an elevation of the whole life. But to do justice to this critical stage in its full significance we must discard other con-

ceptions of morality that look either too superficially or narrowly at the problem. Nowadays morality is frequently understood as merely social, as altruism. The very word altruism betrays the weakness of this mode of thinking. The expression is derived from the thought world of Comte and corresponds to a mode of thought that knows neither a self-sufficiency or an inner concentration of the soul, nor a spiritual depth in reality. Life confines itself here purely to the relationship to its material and social environment. We willingly recognise that even with such a limitation social morality has yielded much that is excellent and still does. It has contributed much to the deliverance from need and suffering, to the alleviation of hardness and severity, to the humanising of the relationships, but it lacks a firm foundation (in the whole of the world order and of the soul), it adheres too much to the surface of existence, it dissipates itself too much in single undertakings, but above all it shuts the eye to the tremendous perplexities which lie in the state of man and glides too rapidly over the evil that has an unheavenly power among us. Therefore this idea of life can by no means satisfy us. Accordingly we must not confuse the ethical and the practical. The latter forms only one side of life, while the other includes all provinces. The research stu-

dent and the artist have also ethical functions. Theirs is to put the whole of their personality into their task and thus to give it a soul. The ethical must therefore be metaphysically grounded and understood as universal. So understood, it gives to life a commanding elevation as well as an inner connection with the creative grounds of reality. Only now can full justice be done to those ideas which actually penetrate our whole life, but are often not sufficiently recognised in their full significance, e.g. the conceptions of personality and duty.

Personality clearly differentiated from other conceptions transcends the particular capacities and tendencies of the soul. Here we deal with a superior unity which penetrates all derivatory ramifications. Personality does not constitute a mere background on which single proceedings are enacted, but it accomplishes an inner elevation of the whole compass of the soul. In it, as the kernel and original fount of life, life gains a sure superiority over all that is ephemeral and not fully human. Man, according to Kant's expression, is "first of all a living being, then a living and reasonable being, but finally as a personality he is a reasonable being responsible for his actions."

Still clearer is the metaphysical basis of ethical activity in the concept of duty. In the

thought of duty a command is recognised, which is independent of human choice, but at the same time is the definite expression of the liberty and self-sufficiency of his spiritual being. Without such recognition on its side the thought of duty is impotent. The sense of duty in particular shows that man belongs to a higher order of reality. Where the moral demand with its thought of duty gains full consciousness it raises the claim to superiority over all other purposes, it rejects all consideration of neutrality or expediency, and bears witness to something unconditional and superhuman that is planted in the life of man. Life is thereby essentially exalted. The moral independence now striven for leads to a deepened idea of the soul, such as is expressed in the words of Jesus, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Recognition is here made of something in the soul which by inherent right has incomparable functions, the fulfilment of which consecrates the rest of life. The performance of the moral function demands liberation from the selfishness that adheres to all human relationships, from the mechanism that dominates nature, and also from the sway of human instincts. Hence the possibility, yes, the urgent demand of an action which is completely independent of and often indeed directly opposed

to selfish interests. Could man, however, by his own strength assert himself in such an action if the power of divine life did not work in him, overcoming the opposition and creating an ennobling and binding love, which far transcends all natural sensuous impulses? To the working of love there must however correspond the working of freedom, in order to show the existence of an order that is superior to nature and man's participation in the same. The province of experience shows a general chain of causation, whose strict operation suffers no exceptions. On the ethical plane, on the other hand, there reigns the conviction that an action which proceeds from mere custom, mechanical compulsion or alien pressure, possesses no inner value, that it in fact does not belong to the moral domain. Accordingly there is required, to make an ethical act possible, an order superior to the chain of causation, an order without which our action loses all originality and therewith its animating soul. Only a bond of love and freedom can make us members of a divine realm, and at the same time raise us out of the domain of space and time. It is perfectly plain that ethical action without the principle of a self-dependent spiritual world is absolutely impossible, that it turns the world of experience topsy-turvy.

All real ethics lead to metaphysics, and this

again shows itself immediately in ethical conduct with its conquest of mere nature. Thus we gain an entrance into the great problem of immortality. Without an ethical basis immortality cannot be reached. Before we follow this line of argument any further it is necessary to make an analysis of the relationship of reason to unreason in the world that lies before us, and to make our position and task perfectly clear.

It was Stoicism which first gave to moral action a scientific foundation and placed it in a systematic world of thought. The earnestness and energy of this school has had a lasting influence on mankind. But the whole of their world-view contains presuppositions which we cannot share. Ancient and Christian Idealism in their judgment of the world are quite different. The ancients regarded the world as a self-sufficient closed system which needed no essential change. That was a matter of fact, there was no problem, there was no true history. According to this view our chief function is to behold the world, and take it up into our thoughts. Bound up with this view is the doctrine, regarded as an all-important lesson of life, that the world is a realm of reason. The Stoics endeavoured to work out this thought, and made it a primary aim of philosophy to overcome the unreason apparent in the actual state of things. The order

of causation and the uniformity of law appeared to them an incontrovertible demonstration of divine government. A God must sustain and rule the world; an All that has parts that are souls must also be a whole that is a soul. God had deliberately constituted the world for reason's sake, and has included individuals in his care. The appearance of ill is only a secondary issue in the course of life, and God will turn it to good. The philosopher came to be represented as an advocate of God, who had to defend Him against the doubts and plaints of men and prove this a good and acceptable world. Thus sprang up the idea of the theodicy, although it was Leibniz who first employed the name. The Stoics saw the chief ground of error in a false estimate of things, and believed that it is the seat of feeling with its varied emotions that entangles us in all the wants and pains of existence. For, according to one of them (Epictetus) the things that thwart exercise power only over him who regards the false as the true. Things, he thinks, do not disturb us, but only our opinions of things. There must be a total repudiation of feeling. The manly soul must keep clear not only of an excess of emotions, but of every emotion, of lust, pain, and desire. The chief object of life is to secure complete peace of soul and the repression of every weak feeling.

Thus, however, the whole life is reduced to an intellectual and rational affair. There is no close relationship to God and what little there is left of immortality lacks the inner warmth of personal immortality. The self-reliance of the spiritually developed man forms here the chief principle of high endeavour. The virtuous possesses already and as long as he lives the full bliss of God.

The Christian view of ethics, the world and immortality is quite different. Christianity by no means delivers the world to unreason; it holds that the world has been created by a holy and gracious world-will in which all spiritual life has its root. Life indeed is fundamentally spiritual. But now there appears in the state of the world a tremendous confusion, the chief reason for which lies in moral evil, which is here understood as a defection from and rebellion against the divine power. The whole reality is thus terribly deranged and the whole meaning of life endangered. The things that hinder and pervert attain such dimensions that a gradual rise by human effort alone can reach no decisive result. Everything that in this direction has been undertaken by mere man has soon proved itself ineffective. Man's position would indeed be hopeless if help did not come from the whole of life, if a liberating and transforming act of God did not take place,

which alone can waken new powers, produce new convictions, and save the world from the dominion of evil. This is the central determinative fact in Christianity which declares itself in the outflow of divine love and mercy, and the offer of a new life by means of an inward union of God with man, which yields to man all the fulness of life divine and bestows upon him as upon a little child the gift of immortality. "In the pure childlike mind of humanity there rises up the hope of everlasting life and without hope the pure faith of humanity in God loses its power." (Pestalozzi).

In this thought-world there is an essentially new attitude to suffering. According to it God shares the suffering. There is a special inwardness in the mutual relationship, for a God, who in blissful majesty lords it over human destiny, remains a distant alien to the soul in its depths. It is only a God who shares the suffering, and as he shares overcomes, who can bring real help. Suffering here appears not only as a hostile hindrance but as the only way to new depths of being, yes, to the life of eternity. This signifies an inner miracle. By the convulsion of man the divine life accomplishes a self-revelation and therewith renews man to the uttermost. Here the intellectualism and the optimism of the ancient philosophy is completely overcome. A

surer way to affirmation is shown, but the affirmation must go through negation in order to reach its height. The affirmation is burdened with so much negation that it drives out completely the natural impulses of life. The natural I and the spiritual moral self are quite distinct entities. Since, however, for the upward striving man, even in the hour of victory, the hostile and painful do not simply vanish, so this life includes the opposing forces of pain and bliss—resistance and overcoming. This is well illustrated by Christian Art, particularly by such great masters of music as Bach and Handel. Christianity sets the soul in perpetual motion and reveals to it otherwise undreamt-of depths. Is it not remarkable that, according to the observation of William James (in his well-known work "Varieties of Religious Experience"), almost the only important autobiographies in the literature of the world have sprung from the soil of Christianity? There arises here a realm of pure inwardness. A wonderfully tender intimacy is reached while at the same time full courage and strength for the battle of life are gained. Man thus reaches a supreme greatness while he is called by divine power and love to co-operate in the great world conflict. This bestows upon him in the midst of all needs an incomparable worth and a full con-

sciousness of community with God as well as of a sure possession of immortality. Immortality is not deduced from single units but from the whole of the supreme life. It is of grace and not a work of nature. We may adduce the words of Augustine: "That cannot pass away which for God does not perish. God, however, is the Lord of the living and of the dead." Not the intellectual, but only the ethical proof, only the formation of life in common with God the source of love, can afford our souls a full consciousness of immortality. In the last resort all that is sought in this direction is rooted in the absolute trust in the love and fidelity of God.

Isolated approaches do not suffice; it is the whole of a living communion with God that rises above all despair and sorrow and confirms souls in the fact of a life superior to the world and grounded in God. If all that animated human existence with spiritual life and ethical activity were extinguished with the dissolution of the body, then not only would the whole human race but also all the spirituality of time perish and all effort and work must break off in the middle of striving, and so prove itself without meaning. We can let that please us only so long as we confine our attention to man, but when the conviction fills us that in our domain the creative life of the whole reveals itself and also demands

our participation, that implies the upbuilding of the spiritual life in the souls and signifies that the whole humanity is a divine work. As such it cannot perish, and everlasting love will never cast us insignificant men away. We know that a more detailed explication of the idea of immortality in terms of space and time is futile, and that our conception with its negations on the one hand and its symbols on the other must suffice. But we must not therefore think that immortality appears only on the fringe of our thought-world and that it means a complicated problem. For the spiritual ascent of life brings a complete reversal. What affects our senses and therefore readily holds good as self-evident recedes into the distance as soon as we proceed from the kernel of life. Here we reach the determinative axioms not merely of knowledge but of life which lie behind and indeed make possible all our activity. We may say with Leibnitz: "God is so to speak the lightest and heaviest, the first and the lightest in the way of brightness, the heaviest and the last in the way of the shadow." So it is with the question of immortality. We cannot successfully meet the problem without turning from the material to the moral and spiritual.

It is just such a transformation of values that the present time requires. Life has been set

more and more in the material world, and has thereby become increasingly superficial. Agonising despair gnaws at the vanquished spiritual principles of life. The divine is ousted too much by that which is petty in man. The truly human, however, has developed a great self-consciousness, it has done much of importance on the periphery of life, but its inner behaviour still suffers from a want of comprehensive and exalting aims that are directed towards life as a whole, as well as from the sharp antagonisms and conflicts that are met with in political, national and economic life. In this unspeakable confusion man is not able to find himself. The more the external world weighs with him, the more it shuts up his inward life. All the more necessary is it therefore to reflect upon ourselves, to find the only way to the depths of life, and in them to gain a firm hold. To such depths, however, our concern for immortality also leads us. If we do not reach this sure basis, then our cultural life is in imminent danger of being utterly nullified. Without a confident faith and a mighty courage the present crisis cannot be overcome.

Science and Immortality

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It will be convenient to place at the beginning of this essay a brief summary of the conclusions which its author deems worthy of acceptance; but a few preliminary observations may precede the summary. It must, in the first place, be admitted that some men of science, perhaps a majority, will reject the conclusions here set forth. Many contend that the belief that biological categories cannot be reduced to physical is perilously based upon our present ignorance. They may grant that psychological categories cannot be similarly reduced; but they prefer agnosticism to what they regard as overconfident synthesis. The writer would not underrate the value of caution; yet man's desire to unify various branches of thought is as strong

as his conviction that there is a unity in the process of which he is a product. Agnosticism is a confession of intellectual impotence with which man will not and, we suggest, need not be satisfied. Again, there are a few men of scientific eminence who will condemn the writer for ignoring what they deem to be the satisfactory evidence for immortality furnished by psychical research. To them he can only reply that he has failed to find conclusive proof that messages can be sent by the dead. He would add that it seems impossible to construct, from "communications" which are thought to have had such an origin, a conception of immortality which has religious values. As this essay deals with the general question of sciences and immortality, the discussion of specifically Christian doctrines has no place in it. Christian belief in immortality will always be associated with, if not based upon, the fact of the Resurrection. But, to those who accept the methods of science, the isolated fact must be set aside. Science starts by framing hypotheses which will explain groups of facts; it proceeds to test these hypotheses either experimentally or by observing allied phenomena. Thus a miracle cannot be included in strictly scientific inquiry, though it may ultimately appear to be congruous with the view of the universe to which such inquiry leads. The

existence of this congruity would naturally be affirmed by all who accept the Christian faith.

Briefly stated, the position maintained in the present essay is as follows. The belief that human personality survives the dissolution of the body is neither confirmed nor discredited by "natural science." There is no direct conclusive evidence for the existence of consciousness apart from life, or for the existence of life apart from matter. All our knowledge negatives the fancies of transmigration and re-incarnation. Belief in human immortality rests on a metaphysical basis. It is a corollary from the acceptance of ethical theism. Natural science only affects the belief in so far as it affects our spiritual interpretation of the universe. But ethical theism is the one satisfactory interpretation which we can reach when we attempt to give unity, not only to conceptions derived from the physical and biological sciences, but also to those which we derive from the study of human consciousness.

As a preliminary to our investigation we must briefly describe the assumptions and limitations of what we may call the lower branches of science and indicate what seems to us to be their relation to the facts of consciousness as we observe its working in man. The natural sciences are constructions of the human mind. They are built upon that which Hort termed the "uniform

repetition of likenesses." From observation and experiment we construct theories which serve to explain certain classes of facts. We thus reach "laws of nature" which are provisional working-hypotheses useful within restricted domains of nature. Their value consists in their predictive power. They enable us to say what will happen when certain experiments are repeated. Great success has attended the attempts of men of science to formulate "laws" in what we term the inorganic world. And, in consequence, the impression grew up and still persists that the blind mechanism, by which the inorganic world seems to be ruled, prevails also among living organisms and conscious beings. Thus the triumphal progress of physics and chemistry led to a belief that the universe to which we belong is the product of certain properties inherent in matter. On this view matter is the sole ultimate reality; life, presumably, must be a peculiar manifestation of properties of matter under certain conditions of pressure and temperature; and consciousness must be a by-product of chemical changes in certain types of living tissue.

For some time it seemed as if this mechanistic interpretation of the world had been confirmed by the biological doctrine of evolution. That doctrine states that "man with his whole mental

and spiritual nature has been derived from lower organisms having no such nature, and they probably in turn from inorganic aggregates." The evidence of geology, embryology and cognate sciences makes it impossible to doubt the first part of this statement; and, though the second part is without experimental confirmation, it is a not unreasonable belief. Assuming its truth, it seemed natural to conclude that life could be explained as a mechanism; that is to say, that laws of the same kind as those which seem adequate for the interpretation of physico-chemical phenomena would serve to explain organic order. But all attempts to reduce biological categories to physical have, so far, failed. As to what life is in itself we are ignorant. In a living organism there is, as Dr. Haldane has well said, a certain persistence of structure and function in relation to environment. Under suitable conditions the relationship endures for a time; and the organism has the power to produce similar organisms in which the same persistence recurs. It is, however, an observed fact that the relation of structure, function and environment is not exactly reproduced in successive generations. Changes which are technically called variations or mutations constantly appear. Moreover, if the general doctrine of evolution be true, such changes have

led to the production, from primitive organisms, of a series of divergent developments which are surprisingly varied and complex. Such facts suggest, not that life can be explained by a mechanistic hypothesis, but that physico-chemical laws over-emphasise the steady way in which free development takes place, to such an extent that they seem to leave no place for free creative activity. So long as we artificially limit our investigations to certain restricted types of phenomena, the laws are useful working-hypotheses. Within the restricted domain we may hope to extend their number and range. But as soon as we throw down the barriers which we have arbitrarily raised and attempt to describe all natural phenomena, including life and consciousness, these "laws" become inadequate. If living organisms have been derived from inorganic aggregates, we must not assume that life can be explained in terms of the convenient hypothesis of blind mechanism which we have constructed for physics and chemistry. We must rather conclude that this hypothesis is only a first approximation to the truth; and that further knowledge will force us, in Dr. Haldane's words, "to transform the present appearance of the inorganic world by tracing life in it." Such a transformation would give us a picture which would, it seems safe to say, be funda-

mentally different from that which seems at present satisfactory to the physicist. But such a picture would not be complete. To get completion we need to include, not merely the fact of the existence of living organisms which do not appear to be conscious; we must also take account of the existence of consciousness in the higher organisms and of ethical self-consciousness in man, if we are to construct some conception which gives unity to the visible universe.

Now, as it seems to the writer, it is legitimate to assume that our sensations can convey to us knowledge of reality external to ourselves. In consciousness we appear to receive atomic sensations. Out of them, their sequence and the thoughts to which they give rise, we construct our conception of the external world. It may be argued that we have consequently knowledge only of our mental states. Unless, however, we abandon the faith that we can in some measure discover absolute truth, we must trust our senses when they tell us that we can know facts which exist independently of ourselves. We must also have faith that we can rightly judge values. That is to say, we must believe that the qualitative judgments, reached by the thought and experience of humanity, are not fanciful but correspond to a something which belongs to the fundamental character of the universe. Our

moral consciousness must thus be assumed to give us knowledge of absolute ethical values. The pictures of the external world which we make may be, and probably are, imperfect, just as the individual's scale of values is notoriously variable. But neither pictures nor values are merely arbitrary constructions of our own. There is a marked likeness between those which we make and those which are made by others in the same stage of that mental and moral development which constitutes civilised life. And we assume that in themselves they give us an approximation, an increasingly close approximation, to a knowledge of the actual nature of things.

Our confidence that our faculties enable us to perceive and value reality external to ourselves cannot be established by cogent argument. It must remain an assumption of reasonable faith. The faith is reasonable, for in practical life we act upon it as a matter of course. We do not, in fact, believe that the world constituted by the mind is merely the private conception of an individual. When we compare our views with those of other men we recognise that we may be sometimes mistaken in our perception and its interpretation; but there is such a similarity in our conceptions as to warrant the conclusion that we have knowledge of the real world,

which is the world of objective and not merely of subjective perception.

This reasonable faith is a postulate of scientific inquiry. When we seek to interpret it we are first of all driven to fix attention on the fact that our consciousness is not independent of that of our fellows. Human personality is not a finished entity wholly independent of similar entities. It is a focus of consciousness, but between various foci there is constant interchange. We are taught and we teach; we receive and we send out "suggestions." Alike in our intercourse with one another, and in our relations to the realm of nature which surrounds us, we are not isolated units, subjects definitely sundered from objects. There are bonds which make us "members one of another," and other bonds which join us to the system of nature of which we are a product.

Now the bonds which join us to one another are primarily qualitative. The strongest of them result from the fact that we share common value-judgments. We can live in peace and harmony with one another only if we subordinate private self-interests to the higher claims of duty and truth. There will always be friction in a society of men unless all its members recognise that Goodness, Beauty and Truth demand their allegiance. To the writer it seems impossible

to believe that this famous trio of values constitutes a set of convenient abstractions which we derive from observation of human life. We perceive them as peremptory commands. "You must do this. You must love that." They express universal, and not merely private, standards and principles. They have, in fact, an absolute existence; and so express the nature of that ultimate reality which we term Spirit. Spirit then is that which, through its attributes of Goodness, Beauty and Truth, constitutes the bond of unity between apparently self-centred individuals. If, as all inquiry leads to believe, there is a unity in the cosmic process of which man is a product, Spirit must also be the source of that unity. Thus, as we pass in turn from the physical to the biological sciences and from them to the study of human consciousness, we are led to a spiritual interpretation of the universe. This implies that the laws of nature cannot form a closed system as we assume when we are thinking in terms of mechanical physics. There cannot be invariable sequence in organic phenomena, for then man would be a mere automaton and his belief that he is free to strive for spiritual ends would be an illusion. Rejecting this view as absurd, we must assume that Spirit permits freedom and is free. Natural laws are its servants, not its masters. Spirit is the nexus

which joins us to our fellow-men. Spirit, not mechanism, is the nexus which gives unity to the world of nature. We cannot see the working of Spirit in the inorganic realm, but we may reasonably suppose that it is there. Its presence in all organic life we can only infer from the existence of spiritual consciousness in man. The theistic interpretation of Spirit we will discuss later. For the present we content ourselves with saying, in theistic language, that God works in the universe in freedom but without caprice. The system of His making is open, not closed; it is not a mechanism independent of Him, but one actuated by Him and designed by Him for ends whose nature is revealed by the development of human personality.

The Christian believes, on the authority of Christ, that personal identity survives the destruction of the body. In what, however, does personal identity consist? Certainly not in the contents of the mind, for these are continually changing. So different is the mind of a grown man from the mind of the same individual when a child that it is difficult to perceive any similarity between the two. Hence Buddhist speculation asserts, and ascribes the teaching to Buddha himself, that, while the body has relative permanence, the mind is in constant process of perishing as one thing and being born as another.

But the body changes remarkably in appearance from infancy to old age; and, though we may reject as a popular superstition the idea that it is completely renewed every seven years, nevertheless some of the material particles of which it is composed are altered, not only after every meal, but with every breath we take. Professor Taylor suggests that the identity of the body is preserved "by continuous development through successive phases according to a definite law of growth." But the law of growth is not definite in the sense that it is wholly independent of environment. It expresses the manner in which the organism develops by making use of its surroundings; but at any moment it is, to use a mathematical term, to some degree a function of the past physical history of the body. Thus bodily identity in a living organism appears to be determined by the fact of continuous development. The material contents of the body are always changing. Its formal structure may be altered by accident, its chemical reactions by disease. Its law of growth at any stage is partly dependent upon its past history. Its identity remains because there is no breach of continuity in that interaction of structure, function and environment which we term its life.

There is a close parallel between mind and body when we seek to determine what we mean

by personal identity. In order that our personality may be the same as it was a year ago, it is not necessary that the contents of the mind should be the same. Some experiences and the concepts to which they have given rise will have been registered in the memory during the year. There will be consequent changes in the way in which we react to external circumstances. We may be better or worse, wiser or more foolish men. But each one of us will retain his personal identity, will be the same man, because there has been a continuous development of mental and moral character. Save possibly for periods of unconsciousness in sleep, there will have been no breach of continuity. Mind and character at any moment are the integration of past experiences and of the manner in which we have reacted to them. It does not seem legitimate therefore to assume that in personality there is any "soul-substance" which does not change. "Soul" is created, through the operation of that ultimate reality which we term Spirit, by a complex process in which racial history and environment are primary agents.

Modern psychological research has established the fact that in the "unconscious mind" experiences which we have apparently forgotten are stored. At times they can be brought again to consciousness by the methods of psycho-

analysis. Yet there is no proof, nor even probability, that all past experiences are thus safely kept. It seems to be true that the unconscious mind is not "a mere aggregate of fringes of consciousness" but an extended domain of the mind where mental processes, of which we are unaware, take place. In this domain we may unwittingly receive suggestions and, when their results become manifest, they may profoundly affect conduct. But we must not regard the conscious and unconscious mind together as a sort of bog in which all our experiences are stored, the bog itself constituting our unchangeable "soul-substance." Our personality at any moment is both a continuous development of, and is dependent upon, its earlier phases. To the writer it seems impossible to dissociate such dependence from memory; and therefore any theories of "reincarnation" or "transmigration of souls," which assume that personality can continue to exist though memory be destroyed, are meaningless. Such theories are often supposed to reconcile the inequalities of human life with Divine justice. But it does not seem just that God should punish me for sins which He has erased from my memory.

The question now arises as to whether personal identity can continue to exist apart from the body with which it is, in our experience, invari-

ably associated. Is personal identity independent of bodily identity? Can any kind of consciousness exist apart from living organisms? It must be frankly admitted that the natural sciences give us no direct evidence that we can answer these questions in the affirmative. Attempts have been made to show that, in man, mind has a greater relative independence of the body than in the lower mammalia. It may be so. But the fact does not enable us safely to argue for actual independence. Moreover, we can only perceive consciousness whose expression, to use a wireless metaphor, is attuned to our own receptive capacity. The hills and streams may sing for joy before the Lord; the planets, as many an ancient thinker of repute believed, may have souls; but we cannot have knowledge of such facts. To us they are, and must remain, superstitions. We reject them, together with other fancies by which anti-intellectualists degrade religion. But we do well to remember that the natural sciences by their very nature are imperfect instruments of inquiry. We approach minds other than our own through material media. So to the physiologist consciousness appears as a by-product of certain specialised forms of living tissue. Huxley as is well known, regarded it as nothing more than an "epi-phenomenon." When, however, in his

Romanes lecture he spoke of war between man and the cosmic process, he gave to human personality an independence greater than his theory allows.

It is indisputable that in man there is an intimate relation between the mind and the brain. If we cut off the supply of oxygen to the brain, consciousness immediately ceases. The secretions produced by certain glands in the body markedly affect the mind. The influence, for example, of the thyroid gland has been demonstrated by the discovery of the pathology and cure of cretinism. By the artificial use of thyroid extract a dull child, defective in character and intelligence, can be made normal. The effects of gout or high blood-pressure on the temper, the mental malaise due to "liverishness," clearly indicate that the body affects the mind. There is no doubt that medical research will greatly extend our knowledge of how the chemistry of the body is associated with the working of the brain. The body is an elaborate chemical manufactory. If its harmonious working is impaired by the defect of glandular secretions, or by the presence of poisons—whether introduced as chemical substances or originating within the body to give rise to what is vaguely called "auto-intoxication"—the brain may cease to function properly. Again, considerable pro-

gress has been made in "mapping-out the brain." Particular areas of the brain are necessary both for the projection of personality in the form of movement or speech, and for the perception of impressions from external objects through various senses. Many of these areas have now been located with considerable accuracy. Thus a surgeon has frequently been enabled to remove a brain tumour which was located because it gave rise to loss of speech or paralysis of a limb. That other areas of the brain are necessary for the association of perceptions, though less completely proved, appears most probable. Owing to the development of such areas in the evolution of man from his anthropoid ancestry, he has become *homo sapiens*. Because of this fact the anthropologist can measure fossil skulls, estimate the size of the cerebral cortex, and so assign them to a fairly definite stage in human evolution. Biologically speaking, man has become what he is owing to the development of his brain. The emergence of that type of consciousness which we call human personality has been made possible by changes in the physical structure of the brain and, probably, by changes in the chemical processes associated with its working.

We have little evidence as to the relation between thought and physical activity in the brain.

It is, for instance, unknown whether for the persistence of memory there must be some definite arrangement of molecules within the brain. It seems probable that, in Hort's words, "man's whole mental and spiritual nature is conditioned by his physical nature and its [physiological] states, no mental or spiritual movement taking place without a corresponding physical movement." But, as Hort pointed out, such a truth, if indeed it be entirely true, contributes nothing to the proof or disproof of immortality. It is the statement of a particular class of facts and it implies by its want of self-sufficiency the existence of other classes of facts. We can assert that the existence upon earth of that particular type of consciousness which we term human personality has been made possible by the evolution of the human brain, and, *pace* the spiritualists, that for its complete manifestation to us the brain must be physiologically intact. But of the nature of human consciousness itself and of the reason for its existence and for the values which it can carry, biological investigations tell us little or nothing. We need to take account of other classes of facts, psychological and metaphysical, if we would pursue the inquiries which are fundamental in the problem of immortality.

The doctrine of evolution indicates the way in

which human personality has been developed. It may be that in primitive organisms some degree of nascent mind exists. If so, we cannot perceive it. External stimuli seem in lowly forms of life to produce purely mechanical reflexes. It is not dawning consciousness, for instance, which makes the flowers turn towards the sun. But out of pure reflexes, if indeed they be pure, some degree of primitive memory seems to arise as organisms develop. Such racial memory, when unaccompanied by thought, appears as instinct. Subsequently there arises associative memory, the capacity of the individual for learning by experience. Birds teach their young; their life is not the mere life of instinct. Then rational thought develops and the power to reason leads to the capacity to frame abstract concepts. Out of this capacity the intellectual, moral and spiritual character of human personality has emerged. Continuous though this inconceivably long process has been, it seems impossible to regard it as a mere unfolding of what was already latent. New qualities, new values, have gradually come into existence. None of us would talk of an intellectual bird, a moral dog or a religious monkey. The human mind, whatever its origin, is a new creation. We are, in literal truth, of more value than the sparrows.

The development of man from his pre-human ancestry has been fundamentally a mental process. At first the size, and presumably therefore the capacity, of the brain increased. It may be that for the last hundred thousand years such increase has been slight. But the development of speech, and latterly the development of writing, have made it possible for human society to integrate its mental advances; and in this way the development of human personality has been rapid. What is the meaning of the result? What is the cause which lies behind the sequence of changes which have led to the human mind? What is the end which the result of the changes serves? The old teleology which found evidences of design everywhere in nature has vanished. Darwin showed how organic structures, so ingenious that to our forefathers it seemed as if they must have been made by an intelligent being, might have come into existence by the "non-purposive mechanism" of natural selection. He even wrote: "There seems to be no more design in the variability of organic beings, and in the action of natural selection, than in the course which the wind blows." There is good reason to doubt this statement. It implies that evolution may be completely explained by a mechanistic theory similar to "laws" which seem adequate in the

restricted domain of physical phenomena. It ignores the fact that we are ignorant of the origin of organic variations. It seems, moreover, to postulate complete freedom of variability whereas, at any stage, the kind of variation possible to an organism is almost certainly limited by its nature. We do not "gather grapes of thorns." There is a harmony in the evolutionary sequence of changes. They are not purely fortuitous. Man, in fact, has not been turned out of nature's workshop by the automatic working of a blind mechanism.

The old limited teleology must be abandoned. But the wider teleology, which assumes that in the whole evolutionary process there is purposive action directed to a definite end, is left intact by biological inquiry. We cannot deny that in the evolutionary development of life upon the earth there has been progress, culminating in man; and, by progress, we mean the successive appearance of powers and qualities which we unanimously accept as valuable. We cannot interpret such progress without assuming that it is due to an intelligent Will. It is true that at every stage progress has been largely determined by environment, and that the whole scheme by which human personality has been evolved seems ultimately dependent on certain properties of inorganic matter. This leads us to

recognise that there is a unity in the universe, not merely a unity which links living organisms together, but a unity between ourselves and the matter of which the earth, the solar system and the whole galactic universe are made. What kind of unity? One, we have answered, which expresses the action of an intelligent Will. If we inquire as to the purpose and nature of this Will, we must examine the values which it has brought into existence. They are the spiritual absolutes of Goodness, Beauty and Wisdom. And the Will to whom we ascribe these attributes we term God. The universe, which within the restricted domain of the natural sciences seems a closed mechanical system, is ultimately purposive and spiritual. Only by false, because partial, limitations of experience can any other view seem plausible. Man has been created for a spiritual purpose and must serve a spiritual end.

It is often urged that such conclusions, so far as they are valid, when combined with the modern scientific outlook, lead naturally to a pantheistic view of the universe. The world, it is said, is as necessary to God as He is to the world. God is immanent and not transcendent; potential, not actual; realising Himself in a process of which human personality is the highest product known to us. Such a doctrine of pure immanence implies that the spiritual exists only

in the phenomenal world. If we accept it, we effectively banish God. As Dean Inge says: "A God who is gradually coming into His own is not yet God, and there is no reason to suppose that such a Being exists." Though theism fails to solve the problem of evil, pantheism cannot escape the logical conclusion that evil and goodness are equally divine. Attempts to evade the pessimistic conclusions of pantheism have led men to construct imaginary pictures of the future. We are bidden to look forward to a time when, if not on this earth, yet on some hypothetical planet to which humanity or its evolved product has migrated, spiritual values are perfected. Such an idea is crude Jewish apocalypticism decked out with fanciful pseudo-scientific finery. It is certain that man will not establish on this earth an everlasting kingdom of righteousness. "Here we have no abiding city." Our sun is, in the technical language of Russell and Hertzsprung, a yellow dwarf star. It has already passed its period of maximum heat and is steadily on its way to extinction. Astronomers tell us that for the age of our stellar system we may take some figure like 10,000 million years. Such at least is Professor Eddington's conjecture, though it is not quite twenty times larger than that of Dr. Jeans. The latter suggests that the age of our solar system is some

300 million years. Let us grant that the earth will still support life for 100 million years; most astronomers would probably say that it is a fantastically high estimate. Yet the period is finite. The end will come, when all man's spiritual victories, when all the spiritual attainments of whatever animals may come after man, will be obliterated. The God who has realised Himself must begin again. We can hardly take seriously the super-aeroplanes by which its inhabitants will succeed in preserving the God who dwells in them from extinction on the dying earth. Dr. Jeans suggests that the solar system may be a freak product, with few or no analogues among the two thousand million stars of which the galactic universe seems to be composed. Some would have us grant that another planet with pressure and temperature conditions suited to earth's inhabitants will in the future be discovered and reached, and that the process of discovery and migration will be continued indefinitely; but they are implicitly asking for a God outside phenomena, who for His own purpose has pre-ordained this complex machinery.

The truth is that no permanent spiritual purpose can be achieved by a purely immanent God. Either the spiritual world exists independently of this world or it is a mere name given to a set of ultimately fruitless ideals. If we postulate

a rational universe and seek to interpret the spiritual values whose existence we perceive, we must assume with Dr. Haldane that "behind our blurred vision of the world lie the love and power of God." The natural sciences emphasise the truth that God acts through phenomena. They make it impossible to preserve the old dualism of natural and supernatural. This conception is based on the belief that "nature" forms a closed mechanical system into which, for its better working, "supernatural" occurrences are occasionally introduced. The truth is rather that "nature" is the scene of continuous spiritual activity. It is the process designed by God to work out His spiritual purpose. But God is not merely correlative to the world. Though He is necessary to its existence, it is not necessary to His own. Goodness, Beauty and Wisdom have been produced on earth as the result of His process. But they belong to an eternal realm of spiritual values; the realm in which ideals are realised as ideas. An ideal is, in Dr. Inge's words, that which "ought to be, but is not"; an idea is its absolute and perfect archetype. Ideas are the attributes of God, constructive values which must have eternal existence with Him in the spiritual universe which lies behind, and reveals itself imperfectly within, phenomena. If they do not exist as absolutes,

His existence can have no meaning. He would be always trying to come into His own and always failing; always fighting, and never winning final victory. There could be no "realm of ends" which constitutes His kingdom.

It is often assumed that modern science, by picturing the universe as an evolutionary process has made a vast change in religious thought. This is fundamentally untrue. Christianity has always regarded human life as a process. It is, in familiar language, a pilgrimage to another world; a way along which men must carry the Cross if they would gain the crown. Process and imperfection, confusion and unrealised ideals are inherent in it. Amid the dust and smoke of conflict personality is being made; but we must seek elsewhere for its final perfecting. Modern science has merely extended such conceptions to the whole realm of nature. In that realm, process and imperfection, confusion and unrealised ideals, are inherent. But the same spiritual purpose which gives its ultimate meaning to the life of man works within the whole evolutionary process of the universe. The whole system of the world is a unity; and the Christian interpretation of human life can be extended to embrace that system in its entirety. God works through nature as through man. He is the source of the spiritual bonds which link human

lives together; but He is also the final and efficient cause without which events would lack their observed coherence.

It has been necessary to discuss the relation of modern science to Theism because, as Dr. Rashdall has well said, "belief in God and belief in Immortality must in the long run stand or fall together." If it be held that science supports a materialist philosophy, then obviously human personality does not survive bodily dissolution. If pantheism be the true interpretation of the universe, we may be imperfect manifestations of Divine activity which will be continued in the life of the race; but our survival after death as individuals there seems no reason to postulate. The belief in human immortality then persists, if at all, as the unreasoned consequence of blind instinct. Only if God, and consequently His realm of absolute values, exist independently of phenomena, can we find a reason and a place for the continued existence of human personality. The reason, briefly stated, is that God is not the God of the dead but of the living. In putting on Christ men put on immortality. Human personality, unlike other types of consciousness known to us, exists not merely in time and space, but also in the realm of spiritual values. These values must be eternal and indestructible with God. In so far as human life is trans-

formed by them, it ceases to be merely life in time and becomes what the Fourth Evangelist terms Eternal Life, that is to say, life with God. We have experience both of life in the flesh and of life in the Spirit. The latter alone carries with it the promise of immortality.

Those who accept the Christian idea of God start from a belief that the universe is rational. Observation of human life forces them to the conclusion that it would be irrational if human personality were destroyed by the death of the body. There must be some other kind of existence for which the earthly life of man is intended to be the preparation. Our present existence does not satisfy our aspirations towards knowledge and holiness. There is an enormous disparity between our spiritual capacities and the meagre achievements possible in three-score years and ten. Often enough the hero and the saint perish miserably because of their spiritual excellence. If we believe that God is just, reason forces us to call a new world into existence to redress the balance of the old. That world is, in Christian language, the kingdom of Heaven.

Speculation with regard to life after death is, of necessity, barren. We cannot conceive of personality without some vehicle for its expression. Consequently in many periods Christians have believed in the resurrection of this present flesh

of ours; that, at the last day, our bodies would be reconstituted as tenements for the soul. A knowledge of elementary chemistry negatives such a fancy. St. Paul suggested that, in place of the natural body, God would provide a spiritual body which would be a suitable instrument for the expression of personality. Such a view belongs to the domain, not of scientific theory, but of spiritual imagination, which is, we may add, by no means the domain of spiritual fancy. It still commends itself, for we must insist upon the value and reality of the individual life. A rational explanation of human endeavour cannot be given if all that survives of the personality which we have built up on earth is some vague essence distilled by consciousness. Individuality must be preserved if each of us is a definite object of God's love. It is natural to assume that the purification and enrichment of personality which take place on earth through service to God will be continued hereafter. If so, the initial stages of the life hereafter will be in time. Yet, when personality is perfected, it seems natural to assume that time and individuality will be alike transcended. In complete and final communion with God we shall get that complete and timeless communion with other souls of which on earth we have rare and fleeting experience.

Such a conclusion will seem to many to have no place in the scheme of the universe which men of science have, since the Renaissance and more especially during the last hundred years, been laboriously constructing. Yet I am convinced that it is the sort of interpretation of man's relation to the world, to which the final synthesis of scientific investigation will ultimately lead. We will end by recapitulating its leading features. The material world of the physical sciences is not the real world. It is a construction made by the human mind out of certain classes of facts; and it only suffices us so long as other classes of facts are ignored. When we extend our investigations, and seek to include the realm of animate nature in our picture, we take a more comprehensive but none the less a limited survey of the universe. At this stage the hypothesis of blind mechanism becomes unsatisfactory. We perceive that there is a creative process at work, an element of free development within the apparently closed system. Finally as we bring consciousness and, in particular, human personality into our inquiry, the character of the creative process is disclosed. It is the product of a Divine Mind working towards definite ends, bringing into existence beings who can begin to think His thoughts and understand His values. We can measure the galactic universe

and enter into the minute structure of the atom because we are in some measure of union with God. For the same reason, the moral law constrains us. We recognise, albeit imperfectly, the claims of duty and truth; we make a spiritual valuation of life. So we are led to the belief that spiritual values have a real objective existence; that they are manifestations of the nature of God. As we participate in these values we appear to create them. But the truth is rather that they make us; in so far as we can work them into our lives we enter the kingdom of God. That kingdom is the eternal spiritual world, the realm of those ends for which God has planned the cosmic process. Consciousness in man has acquired a new nature in becoming spiritual. In Christian language it has been transformed in putting on Christ. By virtue of the Christ-Spirit it has become a fact of the ultimate real world. Because that world is eternal we shall find in it our immortality.

Immortality in the Poets

Maurice H. Hewlett

It is true, as Sir Philip Sidney tells us, that "Nature never set forth the earth in so rich a tapestry as divers poets have done, neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too much loved Earth more lovely." The poet's business is to enhance, in mere ecstasy of gustation, that which, for mortal men needs no adornment. All men share to some extent his ecstasy; but the poet is the body, form and pressure of the time, its highest expression. His emotion is called forth by his reading of his world; so far as he is man he is man's advocate, so far as he is inspired he is our priest. What we believe, hope or desire, that does he; but the yearnings and intuitions which strike us dumb sting him to utterance. He is our best mind made vocal. Now it may be that our weakness has always been to love the world too much, and that the poets, in expressing us, have intensified it. "O

me! O me! How I love the earth, and the seasons, and weather, and all things that deal with it, and all that grows out of it—as this has done!" And "this" for the maid in the fable, voicing the heart of William Morris—"this" was an old house of grey ashlar set in a valley between low hills, and half hidden in trees. It stood for all that Morris knew certainly and loved, obscured for him that which he doubted of and dreaded—Morris, who would never speak or think of death if he could anyways avoid it. And that has been at most times, with certain exceptions, the way of men. Illumination has come, rarely, and a veil been withdrawn. Inspired revelation has, for seasons together, commanded assent. Unless the inspiration should hold or be renewed, assent would decline; and once more man would seek the bosom of his mother the Earth, and look for no better thing at the last than to lie quietly there, his little life "rounded in a sleep." The poet, a little better than the best of men, is still a man. If he were not, perhaps, he would be the less a poet. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." And the love which St. Paul had there in mind was mortal love.

Something flows out of that. The poet is a

man, and his poesy the best of him, his darling thought. If he identified himself with it there is no wonder. If in his pride he cries aloud,

> Nor marble, nor the gilded monuments
> Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme,

it is very possible that he will content himself with immortality in that kind, heedless of any other. More, he may expect it of us too:

> You still shall live (such virtue hath my pen)
> Where breath most breathes—even in the mouths of men.

It is perhaps a tragic revelation of his infirmity that while his imagination enables him to gauge the perishable quality of this world, he will nevertheless entrust it with his fame—yet so it is. He is not able to conceive of immortality apart from his verse, does not care to conceive it apart from his love. The soul of Adonais was "where the Eternal are," but beaconed "to us on Earth," and maintained the relationship without which Shelley could not imagine its existence. Such is the poet, whose genius, though it burn heavenward like a flame, is both kindled and fed by this earth—which may be blown to dust and nothingness at any moment.

We look rather to the poets, then, for transcendent expression than for transcending

thought. Poetry is a transfiguration of thought; if the thought conceives and quickens, another generation will bring forth. So it was that Christianity gave birth to notions which had been dimly discerned and doubtfully foreshadowed in Egypt, in Asia and in Hellas. The ancients, predecessors if not heralds of Christ, accepted the doctrine of the soul's immortality, though (with certain exceptions) they allowed nothing for it. Ancestor-worship, hero-worship, imply the belief; the burning, with sacrifice, of the dead had a ritual significance which points to the soul's continuance and need of comfort. But continuance of what sort? Homer's "House of Hades" was a limbo. The souls in it, and those which were shut out of it, were *ghosts* —"ineffectual shadows," said Andrew Lang, "unfed, unfeared, unworshipped . . . from the House of Hades they never return." And he quotes Achilles in the Odyssey: "Rather would I on earth be the hind of a landless man than King over all the dead." This is far from Christian doctrine with its concomitants of reward and punishment, redemption and reprobation; far from what the Mysteries foreshadowed, or what Plato, probably believed; but it is as far as the common mind uttered by the poets will take us. Consider the Anthology which, more certainly than Homer or the

dramatists, gives us average opinion at its best. Macedonius bids earth farewell: he has run his race, and departs, not knowing whither he is to travel. Another dead poet refuses sacrifice and garlands at his tomb. "Drenching my ashes with wine, you will but make mud of them"; and as for your libations, οὐχ ὁ θανὼν πιέται: "a dead man does not drink." Even so, again and again we find the impossibility men felt of conceiving of another life unrelated to this one. "I died," says one, "but await you. You too will wait for someone. Death awaits us all." And Plato cries to his beloved:

> My star, once on the quick as Morning Star
> Thy light was shed;
> A Star of Even now, thou shinest afar
> Upon the dead.

There was little comfort there. With a common lot for us all, this life was best. The gods could not help us if they would.

The Latin religion was of the earth earthy, its gods were dæmons resident in the things of this world. Janus, with two faces, lived in a gate; Vesta was the good fairy of the hearth; Faunus watched over cattle; Quirinus was god of war; Terminus was a mear-stone. Upon that primitive stuff was imposed the theology of Hellas; upon the compounded brew orgiastic cults from

Egypt and Syria. The poets went no further than their fellow-citizens; some indeed lagged behind them, protesting. Lucretius was such a one. He was driven to admit phantasms of the dead, "traces left, somehow, on something." They had, however, no root in nature; they were subjective experiences, freaks of memory. "This I will put forward," he says, "that we may not haply believe that souls break loose from Acheron or that shades fly about among the living, or that something of us is left behind after death, when the body and the nature of the mind, destroyed together, have taken their departure into their several first beginnings." That is the exordium of his fourth book which immediately expounds his argument. Mind and soul alike are mortal with the body. Birth is the beginning, Death is the end. Yet death is nothing, "concerns us not at all." "It matters no whit whether we have been born into life at any other time when immortal death has taken away our mortal life." A stern philosophy, leading as often as not whither it led this son of Epicurus. Tennyson gives him fair expression:

> . . . that hour perhaps
> Is not so far when momentary man
> Shall seem no more a something to himself,
> But he, his hopes and hates, his homes and fanes,

> And even his bones long laid within the grave,
> The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,
> Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,
> Into the unseen for ever . . .

He was a stout heart who faced that bald and blank outlook, who taught himself to look for a life to come in the Roman race; who

> metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
> Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.

Upon that unlikely tilth in due time was cast the Christian seed.

Christian doctrine, systematised, worked upon, philosophised by latter-day Greek thought, laid down an eschatology which has never substantially varied. The creed of Nicæa is still its formula. Dependent upon it is the Christian ethic which still holds good, though rather as a premiss than as a conclusion. The resurrection of the dead implies that of the body; the blisses of Heaven and pains of Hell may be taken literally as discernible by bodily sense. In such terms the Christian poets sang of the world to come. From the *Apocalypse* to the *Divine Comedy* there was no variation except in handling. The late-Latin hymns come in between: one is that beautiful thing which closes with a vision of Heaven—

Pax ibi florida, pascua vivida, viva medulla,
Nulla molestia, nulla tragœdia, lachryma nulla!
O sancta potio, sancta refectio, pax animarum,
O pius, o bonus, o placidus sonus, hymnus earum!

Another, but a later, is the terrific *Dies Iræ* with its tocsin note:

Tuba mirum spargens sonum
Per sepulcra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum.

Such poems are as materialistic as the *Doom* of Orcagna, charged less with imagination than with dogma. There is chapter and verse for every detail of the ornament and every crotchet of the music. The mind of man had been broken by the Church to conformity. The poets believed; belief was of obligation; they were fervent in belief; but they revealed no more than had been sanctioned.

Even Dante was no great innovator. His epic of Heaven and Hell was not the first of such poems. There were a *Journey of St. Brandan*, a *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, a *Vision of Tundale*, and whatnot. What he did was to give imperishable form to the beliefs of an Age, to express them in terms of dogmatic theology; to shape the whole into an allegory of the passage of man through this world and another. "The

subject of the whole work," he says in his letter to Can Grande, "taken literally, is the state of souls after death, regarded as a fact; for the action deals with this, and is about this. But if the work be taken allegorically, its subject is man, in so far as by merit or demerit in the exercise of free will he is exposed to the rewards or punishments of justice." I could not, myself, admit for a moment that the allegory extends to the persons of the poem—that Dante stands for Every-Man, Virgil for human knowledge, or Beatrice for divine theology. Heavenly love, apocalyptic vision, were inspired in Dante by human love, and by a vision which saw Beatrice fair among the daughters of men, and Virgil chief among the poets. "He had it in his heart to yield such honour to Virgil . . . as none had ever paid, and to write concerning Beatrice, 'what had not been written before of any woman.'" And, as Symonds goes on to say, the whole poem is replete with his earthly experience. His enemies are in torment, or suing out their purgation on the Mountain; his friends are in bliss. He allows his private judgment to vary ever so little the teaching of the Church. Virgil is allowed into Purgatory, Trajan and Ripheus are in Paradise, carnal sin is granted its alleviation—there shall never be separation of Paolo and Francesca. Dante's materialism in fact is

illuminated and sometimes transcended by his genius. If it is not more impressive than the *Revelation* of St. John it is more beautiful—because it is more human.

Art conceals a system in the *Divine Comedy* as rigid as that of the *Summa Theologiæ*. Every step is premeditated; the poem moves on by the clock and the almanac. The sites are all fixed; one could make a chart of the circles of the pit and stages of ascent of the mount; one could lay down the involutions of the spheres, and find within them by the compasses the heart of the Mystic Rose. The colours of things seen are as clear as Fra Angelico's: *l'aer bruno*, the *dolce color d'oriental saphiro*, the *tremolar della marina*, the

> ombra smorta
> Qual' sotto foglie verdi e rami nigri
> Sopra suoi freddi rivi l'Alpe porta;

and so with the persons moving in this positive landscape: historical or allegorical, there is no faltering in the drawing of them. Dante borrows from the writer of the *Apocalypse*, from Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, and hardens, outlines and defines what he takes. His vision of the world *di là* is absolute, and more so, apparently, for the very limitations of the knowledge upon which it proceeded. "The souls he sees sousing

in Hell, the painful initiates on the Mount of Purgation, the white-stoled Convent of Heaven are gathered from a square of thrice ten-score miles, and represent the memories of a hundred years, or the thumb-marks of a few classics. Yet his grip is so sure, and his scope so wide, you think that you see the whole world under his span. He was in that world, indeed, but not of it. As, when he had reached the eighth starry Heaven, he could look down through the seven spheres—

> e vidi questo globo
> Tal, ch'io sorrisi del suo vil sembiante—

so it had been with him since Love first raised him up. He could hold the spinning thing in his hand; there was no difficulty there." The triumph was that out of particulars so few and insignificant he could read universal law so vast. Dante's is a poem of the Schools, it may be. Perhaps one could date or place it by the reading of a single canto. But it is final and consummate. There had never been such a poem before, and never would be such another.

In the age which that great poem ushered in faith so absolute and vision so precise could not hope to endure. Neither Petrarch nor Boccaccio did more than acquiesce; nor should we look for more in Chaucer than lip-service to the

implications of man's immortality. So much was his duty as a Christian or an ordinary man; it was as much as you could expect from a fourteenth century poet in his prime. It is true that he rounds off the *Canterbury Tales* with the Parson: "Thanne shal men understonde what is the fruyt of pennance; and, after the word of Jhesu Crist, it is the endelees blisse of hevene"; equally true that he makes formal "Retraccioun" of those of the *Tales* "that sownen in to synne." It is not for such pious measures that we love Chaucer. They are of the same mint as the decent doxology which ended every poem of the time, which even Boccaccio did not always forget, of which even Villon, "at the instance of his mother," made a refrain:

> En ceste foy je vueil vivre et mourir.

Chaucer, as a matter of fact, used Christian doctrine with all other learning sacred and profane as so much poetical grist. At the end of *Troilus and Criseyde* he borrows from the *Paradiso*, to enhance the death of the Trojan prince, that very figure which I quoted—that of seeing the dusty world from a height:

> And whan that he was slayn in this manere
> His lighte goost ful blisfully is went
> Up to the holwnesse of the eighté spere,

In convers leting everich element:
And ther he saugh with ful avisement
Th'erratik sterrés, herknyng armonye
With sounés fulle of hevennish melodye.

And down from thennés faste he gan avise
This litel spot of erthe that with the see
Enbracéd is, and fully gan despise
This wrecched world, and held al vanité
To réspect of the pleyne felicité
That is in hevene above. . . . .

So far he follows the twenty-second, *Paradiso*, but goes on to make a fine use of it when he describes the soul of Troilus looking down at its discarded body, and laughing at those "that wepen for his deth so faste." It is reasoning as a Christian, for all that it is light-hearted reasoning.

The pococurantism of the Middle Ages, however, experienced sharp reactions. Death was close at hand; War slew its thousands, plague its tens of thousands. On some sudden wave of terror blown overland by the preachers whole townships turned flagellant and the Pilgrimage churches would be beset. *Timor mortis conturbat me:* the people recovered their faith which otherwise they were apt to hold by them, stored like a remedy in the medicine cupboard. "Now I, to comfort him, bid him 'a should not think of God. I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet." So did

Mistress Quickly when Sir John lay on sick bed; but in the fifteenth century there was frequent need to think of God. Langland's *Vision* is one long exhortation to repentance. No large significance can be attached to the testimony of Langland, Wyclif or their converts. For the general the Faith had been once for all delivered; and delivery made, the estate was put by for a rainy day. Then came the Renaissance, the awakening of curiosity, and the readjustment of man's views of himself, his entourage, his liabilities, and his prospects.

Rabelais need not be called a sceptic because he was profane. Profanity is as much a mark of the true believer as of the unbeliever, or the Italian peasant as he may be observed, taking his ease in his church, is not the devout creature we believe him. Montaigne "confesses and avoids" (as the lawyers say) the Christian faith. He affirms it, with qualifications which are rather implied than declared. His famous discourse upon the book (on Natural Religion) of Raymond de Sebonde is designed to base faith upon reason, and to diminish the pretensions of men. He is scornful of any faith otherwise established. "Plaisante foy, qui ne croid ce qu'elle croid, que pour n'avoir le courage de la descroire!" He refutes the doctrine of the soul's pre-existence, and can find little to say of

transmigration but that the notion is "plaisante." As for a future life, "Confessons ingenuement que Dieu seul nous l'a dict, et la foy. Car leçon n'est-ce pas de nature et de nostre raison." Just as Rabelais had reclaimed the liberty of laughter, so Montaigne that of enquiry. Shakespeare followed them there.

Whether Shakespeare doubted the immortality of the soul is a question I am not able to answer with confidence. A very positive little *Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of Shakespeare*, by W. J. Birch, M.A., published in 1848, held it for certain that the poet was both sceptic and scoffer. Dr. Johnson, too, did not at all approve of his theology. No doubt he was a Protestant in the sense that he refused Catholicism; but there is practically nothing in the plays to prove him a Christian. It is a question whether there need, or could, have been. His work is much more dramatic than classic drama ever was. No Chorus proclaims average opinion, or opinion which can be held as his own, on his scene. It is true that he puts into the mouths of Christians—Richard II, Angelo, Hamlet—judgments of mortality which no Christian could consciously hold; and it is not easy to explain that except by suggesting that he wished to secure the assent of his audience. I do not think we need avoid the reflection that, in

Shakespeare's age, current thought upon Immortality was crystallised, and what is called a "pious opinion." The world was wider than it had been, and as full of tongues as Rumour. The authority of the universal Church had been weakened, the authority of the infallible Bible not yet established. That which to Dante had been a matter of vision, to Chaucer of devout acquiescence, was to Shakespeare one view among many of the dædal earth. If Macbeth could "jump the life to come," if to Hamlet the "rest" were silence, we may be sure that it was quite safe to say so upon the Elizabethan theatre. Against these sayings may be set Henry the Fifth's "Tarry, sweet soul," and Laertes,'

> I tell thee, churlish priest,
> A ministering angel shall she be,
> While thou liest howling—

rhetorical figures though they be. It is not here a question of Christianity—Shakespeare never professed that faith so openly as in his will; and his will was common form—it is a question of belief in Immortality. The plays do not—perhaps cannot—prove that Shakespeare thought there was anything worth having after death. More significantly, the Sonnets do not prove it either. Sonnet VI:

> Be not self-will'd, for thou art much too fair
> To be Death's conquest, and make worms thine heir,

does not point beyond the grave. Sonnet XVIII promises a highly qualified hereafter:

> So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
> So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Sonnet LXXIV shall be given entire:

> But be contented: when that fell arrest
> Without all bail shall carry me away,
> My life hath in this line some interest,
> Which for memorial still with me shall stay.
> When thou receivest this, thou dost review
> The very part was consecrate to thee:
> The earth can have but earth, which is his due;
> My spirit is thine, the better part of me.
> So then, thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
> The prey of worms, my body being dead;
> The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,
> Too base of thee to be remembered.
> The worth of that is that which it contains,
> And that is this, and this with thee remains.

I began this essay by reminding the reader that the poet could not easily disassociate himself from his script, and in its immortality might be content to find his own. I take that to have been the case for Shakespeare, to whom the world was less a stage than an inn. The guests

came and went, ate, drank, ruffled, made merry, and paid the reckoning. Quietly he sat by, looking on, knowing all about the springs of their bustling, fervid commerce, concerning himself scarcely at all with their fate beyond the door. *Maestro di colo che sanno*, reader of the hearts of men! But he did not care to look beyond the "flaming ramparts of the world." He was a poet, not a bard; a reader, not a seer.

Where Shakespeare would not question, or, rather, do more than question, Spenser, the Platonist, was bold to affirm. His four fine hymns testify to his faith both in the pre-existence from eternity and final reassumption of the soul.

> For when the soule, the which derived was,
> At first, out of that great immortal Spright,
> By whom all live to love, whilome did pass
> Downe from the top of purest heaven's hight
> To be embodied here, it then tooke light
> And lively spirits from that fayrest starre
> Which lights the world forth from his firie carre.

And the beauty of this visible world is but a copy of the other:

> So every spirit, as it is most pure,
> And hath in it the more of heavenly light,
> So it the fairer bodie doth procure

To habit in, and it more fairely dight
With cheareful grace and amiable sight;
For of the soule the bodie forme doth take;
For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make.

Sheer Plato, all that; and the thought need not be disdained of them who follow the Gospel according to Saint John. Through the generations after Spenser, those of Ben Jonson and the neo-pagans, the Christian lamp, whether fed by the *Phædrus* or with the pure chrism of the old faith—the purer indeed for its late tribulations—was kept alight. It throws a mild beam from George Herbert:

"Call in thy death's head there: tie up thy fears.
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need,
Deserves his load."
But as I raved and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling "Child!"
And I replied, "My Lord!"

It is full-fed, and sometimes garish, in Crashaw —as when he tells St. Teresa,

Thou shalt look round about, and see
Thousands of crown'd souls throng to be
Themselves thy crown: sons of thy vows,
The virgin-births with which thy sovereign spouse
Made fruitful thy fair soul. Go now
And with them all about thee, bow

To Him: "put on (He'll say) put on
(My rosy love) that thy rich zone
Sparkling with the sacred flames
Of thousand souls, whose happy names
Heaven keep upon thy score" . . .
and so
Thou with the Lamb, thy Lord, shalt go.
And wheresoe'er he sets His white
Steps, walk with Him those ways of light,
Which who in death would live to see,
Must learn in life to die, like thee.

Burning rhetoric indeed, inspired by the very ecstasy of vision, if, (as I think) rendering rather ecstasy than vision. Crashaw is no reasoner, but a God-fraught mystic. Henry Vaughan must be put beside him, with his curious anticipation of Wordsworth's great Ode. He calls it "*The Return*":

Happy those early days, when I
Shined in my angel-infancy . . .
When yet I had not walk'd above
A mile or two from my first Love,
And looking back, at that short space
Could see a glimpse of His bright face . . .
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense
A several sin to every sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.

Vaughan, too, could be rapt into beatific vision:

> I saw eternity the other night,
> Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
> All calm, as it was bright.

And so we come to Milton and his justification of the ways of God.

Milton, though he was a Puritan, was a Humanist as well. He was the most learned of our poets; and it may be his learning which gives to *Paradise Lost* its air of argument, of being a "brief," and to the reader the feeling that heart is not so much engaged as brain in it. It is cloudy and magniloquent where the *Divina Commedia* is crystal clear: remarkable that Dante's faith has taught him precision of epithet and qualification, and that Milton's ratiocination has had upon his poem the opposite effect. Nobody can doubt that he held to the Immortality of Man. Yet his strongest plea for the personality of God is to be had out of his firm conviction of that of Satan. There are but two human characters in the poem, of whom one, Eve, is beautifully and wisely touched. None of the heavenly or infernal hosts is clear, except Satan, whose presentment is a masterpiece. The Godhead is veiled in a cloud of sublimity such as Milton only of men could gather. I

cannot imagine a heathen closing *Paradise Lost* convinced of his immortal essence, nor a Christian the more grounded in his faith; but assuredly no man with a relish for poetry could read it through without extraordinary elation and enlargement of mind. If it lacks the conviction in the writer which is the driving power of the *Divine Comedy* to win from the reader the sense of inevitability, of "thus and thus" it was and must have been, it is because Milton himself lacked the vision which Dante had.

The Apostolate of John Wesley broke up eighteenth century opinion which before his time had declined largely into deism. From deism into indifferentism is not a long stage. A vigorous morality can consist with either; and that is what we get from such poets as Pope, who was a Catholic, from Gray who was a Gallio, from Johnson who was orthodox. When Swift was made Dean of St. Patrick's the epigram went about,

> A deanery he has won at last
> By means most strange and odd;
> And might a bishop be in time,
> If he'd believe in God.

Swift's sermons are as purely ethical as Sterne's, and may have no better sanction; his verse is not remarkable for its piety. Those, on the other

hand, on whose lips Wesley had laid the live coal thought dreadfully of Immortality, and lost their apprehension of everlasting bliss in their dread of its opposite. Cowper is a standing example. He was literally terrified out of his wits, the gentlest soul ever lodged in frail body. To such strange uses may our musing upon high things bring us that Cowper, who would have died if he had been conscious of such a state of mind, was actually in little better case than the pagan Catullus:

> Soles occidere et redire possunt:
> nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux,
> nox est perpetua una dormienda!

And Cowper loathed to live, yet feared to die. Before his spirit could be set free a new age was born.

Wordsworth the pantheist (as he was throughout the years of his inspiration) was a more certain voice than the orthodox, conforming moralist of his later years. The *Ode* is a magnificent poem, illuminating and suggestive, but whether it pronounces for the personal Immortality in which Dante believed, or a reabsorption in "God who is our home," I should not venture to say:

> Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
> Thy soul's immensity;

Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind. . . .

Certainly, the more you enhance the soul's immensity, the more you extenuate the hopes of an enduring personality. While it may be true that

in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore—

the chances, to the poet's mind, seemed to point to our being utterly engulfed in that sea of Being, which has been the belief and consolation of all mystics from the first to the last—but not of the generality of men. *They* see little difference between the rounding of a little life by a sleep and its emptying into God. Difference there may be, but not enough to build upon.

Yet no greater promise has been held out to us through our poets since Wordsworth. Browning and Tennyson were optimists by temperament and eclectics in philosophy. They had the testimony of ages behind them, and the world

mapped out before them, "where to choose." Neither of them doubted of Immortality, but neither ventured more than generalities upon it. Tennyson reduced his "obstinate questionings" to accord with Wordsworth's answer:

> My own dim life should teach me this,
> That life shall live for ever more
> Else earth is darkness at the core,
> And dust and ashes all that is.

Reason assures the elegist by a *reductio ad absurdum* yet the question returns:

> How fares it with the happy dead?

And hope serves for an answer:

> Oh yet we trust that somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill. . . .

Finally,

> I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
> And gather dust and chaff, and call
> To what I feel is Lord of all,
> And faintly trust the larger hope.

The "larger hope" led him further towards pantheism as he grew older. Browning's Rabbi ben Ezra believed himself, "a god though in the germ," and "*Easter Day*" ends,

Christ rises! Mercy every way
Is infinite,—and who can say?

Who indeed of us, if not the poet?

A faith, which can only be expressed in a sighed question, is not one to sustain the many; but such as it is the poets of our day cannot better it. Of the only living poets whose gifts and attainments are comparable with those of our prime, one is a Stoic, the other an Epicurean. The Poet-Laureate musing on a dead child:

So quiet! doth the change content thee?—Death, whither
hath he taken thee?
To a world, do I think, that rights the disaster of this?
The vision of which I miss,
Who weep for the body, and wish but to warm thee and
waken thee?

Though the vision fail him, conscience never will, nor pity, nor gentleness. For Mr. Housman, night is the end, and day all too short. Life appears as a *mauvaise plaisanterie.* "Pauvre et triste humanité." That is where we are at present.

The sum of it all is that the poet voices, does not lead, his age. If he voices with conviction, distinction or force, a following may be gained for his utterance in a generation later than his own. As for him, he is not a teacher, and no

more of a prophet than the rest of us. He is a conduit-pipe for the Spirit, perhaps:

> Io mi son' un' che quando
> Amor mi spira, noto, ed a quel' modo
> V'è detta dentro vo significando.

But who has believed his report? Those among the tongue-tied who know as much as he does.

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